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LETTERS FROM THE SOUTH.

Letters from the South,

WRITTEN DURING

AN EXCURSION IN THE SUMMER OF

1816.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

JOHN BULL AND BROTHER JONATHAN, &c. &c.

Ridentem dicere verum quid vetat? *Horace.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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Southern District of New-York, ss.

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"Letters from the South; written during an excursion in the summer of 1816. By the Author of John Bull and Brother Jonathan, &c. &c.

Ridentem dicere verum quid vetat? HORACE."

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CHARLES FINN,
Clerk of the Southern District of New-York.

LETTER XXII.

DEAR FRANK,

THE other day, in taking a ramble from the Spring, I came to a where a fine trout stream of a most promising appearance skirted the foot of a long rambling hill. The sight of this brook revived my old propensity to fishing, which I ascribe to having early in life fallen in with honest Isaac Walton's work on angling; to my mind, one of the most pleasant books in the language. He mingles so much of a taste for natural beauty, so much of poetical feeling and description, and so much genuine simplicity, with his art, that one can't help loving the honest fisherman. The book begins with a dialogue between a fowler, a hunter, and an angler; in which each endeavours to establish the superiority of his favourite amusement. Honest Walton, as might be expected, gives the

best of the argument to the latter, who, I remember, demonstrates the superiority of his art by proving that a majority of the apostles were fishermen.

I borrowed a fishing-rod from a miller near by, and followed the brook some miles without catching a fish of any kind; either because there were none, or that the little wretches would not come and be caught. I was always in hopes of catching them, however; and this, I take it, after all, is the great pleasure of fishing and fowling. Trout do not abound so greatly in the mountain streams to the south, as they do in the north. "The chubb, chiven, or knob," as Walton calls him, is common in many places; but the most singular fish in this part of the world is called the *stone-toter*,* whose brow is surmounted with several little sharp horns, by the aid of which he *totes* small flat stones from one part of the brook to another more quiet, in order to make a snug little circular inclosure, for his lady to lie in safely. This is truly a most ancient and fishlike gallantry, and right worthy the imitation of all bad husbands.

* *Tote*,—To carry with labour; to lug along.

I am assured by gentlemen of veracity, that this part of the natural history of the stone-toter is actually true, though I suppose the orthodox naturalists will scout it, because it is not yet found in print, that I know of. These good people, the naturalists, make a certain code of laws, which they are pleased to call the laws of nature, and which, if the poor lady happens to transgress, she is accused of committing a grand *faux paux*, and her reputation grievously assailed. They will, no doubt, call this account of our polite fish a vulgar error, as they do every thing of which they are ignorant themselves; in pure spite, because other people discovered it before them. But I am sure the vulgar errors of the wise are tenfold greater than those of the ignorant. How many learned theories, the result of most laborious stupidity, have we seen pass away, like shadows, at the dawn of day, only to give place to others more stupidly absurd; while the results of the daily experience of the unlearned remain the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The learned would contradict them if they dared, because they can't explain them; like the worthy gentleman who would not believe his hat was blown from his

head, till he had consulted the fashionable theory of winds.

As I had heard much of the rattlesnakes and moccasins that infest these regions, I was on the look out for them during this little excursion: but I did not meet a single one, nor do I believe they are by any means common. But I must tell you a story I heard from a honest man, at whose cabin I stopt awhile to rest myself along the brook. Before I begin the story, however, I will give you a sketch of his establishment, which will serve for a specimen of the people of these mountains.

His castle—every man's house is his castle, you know,—ergo, every house is a castle—was placed at the foot of the sunny side of a high hill, for the convenience of sunning the children; a practice equivalent to meat, drink, washing, and lodging, to these little rogues. It also turns their hair white; which is considered a great beauty in a country where all men are born free and equal, and the blacks are slaves. It contained one large room, and a garret, that was ascended by a ladder, which, by the by, was quite unnecessary, as they might have made a pair of stairs of the children,

who were of all sizes, in regular gradation, from eighteen inches to six feet. It was a perfect bee-hive, full of living things. About the mantel-piece, or where mantelpieces usually are, was an almanac, a comb-case, and several spools of cotton, and about the fireplace lay a cat and dog fast asleep, while a little pig was smelling about, as is usual with that busy race. Nothing can give a more striking picture of the peace and quietude of a country cottage, than to see the antipathies of animals thus completely reconciled within its homely walls.

The good woman of the house was turning a large spinning-wheel, and ever and anon, as she passed back and forth, touched a cradle with her foot, in which reposed the youngest hope of the house, lulled to repose by the sonorous humming of the wheel. Two little urchins sat at the door munching apples, with heads rather whiter than their faces; two little boys were drawing hides from a vat near the house; two stout lads of sixteen or eighteen were in a little meadow across the brook; and the mother mentioned her eldest daughter had gone that morning with two more

of her children to a school the other side of the mountain. "Body o' me," thought I, where do all these people sleep? But, as it was none of my business, I did not inquire. Labour and health can sleep right sweetly, where pampered idleness and bloated gluttony would lie awake, cursing their stars.

This industrious dame was a healthy, well-looking body enough; not quite so hollow in the shoulders though as some of our fashionable ladies, who really do screw themselves up in such an equivocal manner, that were it not for their faces one would be puzzled to tell whether their backs or fronts were towards him. This fashion is a decisive proof of the modesty of the sex—since we can admire the ladies' backs, even to intensity, without putting them to the blush. For my part, I don't know what will be the end of all this; nor, indeed, do I much care, only I don't like to see too much of a good thing. But to return to the lady of the castle, who had no great pretensions to fashion, but was a true woman for all that—for she made a number of excuses on account of her house being so much out of order.

Jenny had gone over the mountain before she had time to put things to rights, and she herself had enough to do besides.

The husband was a tanner, which accounts for his looking so young as he did; as your tanners, you know, will last longer than other people. A sturdy dog—he would not take half a dollar I offered him for a bowl of milk, but actually looked as if he would *gouge* me when I insisted upon it. I could only account for his stupid indifference to money, from there being no banks in this neighbourhood. People are always more rational and enlightened where banks are plenty, and will take "kicks and coppers" with great thankfulness, provided they come together. I am sorry to be under the necessity of confessing, that this refusal of the tanner furnishes another proof of the inferiority of the people of the back country to those of the cities, in politeness, refinement, and, above all, in that most precious of all knowledge, a knowledge of the value of money. The inside of this ignorant man's house was furnished with two beds below, and the Lord knows how many above—a cradle—plenty of straw-bottomed chairs —a rifle hanging against the wall—good store of

bacon—plenty of children—a staunch hound, and notable pussy, both acknowledged members of the family. The poor soul was content, for he did not know any better; and though I could easily have proved to him how miserable he was, I thought it better to let him alone.

And now for the story, which he related, in answer to my inquiries about rattlesnakes. He told me, that somewhat more than six miles off, in the recesses of one of the most unfrequented mountains, there was a deep, circular valley, the bottom of which is covered with loose, flat stones that have fallen down its steep sides. A gentleman on a visit to the springs once hired him and another person, a hunter, to accompany him to this valley, in order to ascertain whether the stories he had heard, but disbelieved, about it, were true. They descended it, but without seeing a single snake; and the gentleman began to banter the hunter, who told him to stamp hard upon the flat stone where he was standing. He did so, and presently a good dozen rattlesnakes came out, to see who knocked at the door, I suppose. Alarmed at sight of the strangers, the snakes began to sound their rattles like so many Philadelphia

watchmen waked from a sound sleep, and thereupon came forth several thousands of these reptiles, who rattled and hissed at such an execrable rate, that they were glad enough to retreat out of the valley with all convenient expedition. The tanner moreover added, that there was a great smell of cucumbers, and that for his part he did not much mind the rattlesnakes, being used to them, but he could not reconcile himself to the looks of a rascally fellow, the like of which he had never seen before, who carried a great fin on his back, was shaped like a sunfish, and hissed ten times louder than his neighbours. The existence of a valley somewhere in this part of the world, containing a vast number of rattlesnakes, is believed by many well-informed people; but as to the little fellow with the fin, his being must remain a matter of doubt for the present. Whether the laws of nature permit a snake to wear a fin, must be left to those who *make* laws for her. Good bye.

LETTER XXIII.

DEAR FRANK,

I FEEL this morning a sort of humorous sadness; a sense of loneliness, and absence, and carelessness, that half amounts to a gentlemanlike melancholy. I believe I could entertain a score or two of blue devils; and be actually sad, if I could only find a tolerable reason to be sorry. Unluckily, I can't find a reasonable occasion to be unhappy; for I have got well of all my complaints, real and imaginary; have a reasonable supply of paper-money for my occasions; have got over my fears of French influence, ever since Napoleon began to grow fat—and am a bachelor! Yet, for all this, could I rail at the first-born of Egypt, and even find fault with the worthy lady at whose house we now are, detained by a shower, although her face is the

picture of good humour, and her house the abode of good cheer. I intended to reason a little this morning, on cause and effect—a new subject! but, I reasoned, as people sometimes get up of a morning, wrong end foremost. I then joked the waiter, but got worsted, which only made me worse than before. This state of mind, under the influence of which the heart falls into a heavy depression, without any particular cause that we know of, is sometimes ascribed to a presentiment of approaching evil, a warning coming from some mysterious source with which we are altogether unacquainted. But this is a superstitious idea, and consequently is discarded by philosophers, who in general attribute it to an absence of real sources of misery, which leaves a vacuum for imaginary ones to creep in, and make a great bustle. They say the best and most radical cure for this mental disorder, is substantial care and real trouble; and accordingly agree in recommending matrimony as a sovereign remedy; that being the great evil, which renders all others insignificant. But instead of flying to this desperate remedy, I will try what occupation of mind will do in the way of relief.

In truth, the little solitary nook into which I am just now thrown, bears an aspect so interesting, that it is calculated to call up the most touchingly pleasing exertions, in the minds of those who love to indulge in the contemplation of beautiful scenes. We are the sons of earth, and the indissoluble kindred between nature and man, is demonstrated by our sense of her beauties. I shall not soon forget last evening, which Oliver and myself spent at this place. It was such as can never be described—I will therefore not attempt it; but it was still as the sleep of innocence—pure as ether, and bright as immortality. Having travelled only fourteen miles that day, I did not feel tired as usual; and after supper strolled out alone along the windings of a little stream about twenty yards wide, that skirts a narrow strip of green meadow, between the brook and the high mountain at a little distance.

You will confess my landscapes are well watered, for every one has a river. But such is the case in this region, where all the passes of the mountains are made by little rivers, that in process of time have laboured through, and left a space for a road on their banks. If nature will do these

things, I can't help it—not I. In the course of the ramble the moon rose over the mountain to the eastward, which being just by, seemed to bring the planet equally near; and the bright eyes of the stars began to glisten, as if weeping the dews of evening. I knew not the name of one single star. But what of that? It is not necessary to be an astronomer, to contemplate with sublime emotions the glories of the sky at night, and the countless wonders of the universe.

"These earthly godfathers of heaven's lights,
"That give a name to every fixed star,
"Have no more profit of their living nights,
"Than those that walk and wot not what they are.

Men may be too wise to wonder at any thing; as they may be too ignorant to see any thing without wondering. There is reason also to believe, that astronomers may be sometimes so taken up with measuring the distances and magnitude of the stars, as to lose, in the intense minuteness of calculation, that noble expansion of feeling and intellect combined, which lifts from nature up to its great first cause. As respects myself, I know no more of the planets, than the man in the moon.

I only contemplate them as unapproachable, unextinguishable fires, glittering afar off, in those azure fields whose beauty and splendour have pointed them out as the abode of the Divinity; as such, they form bright links in the chain of thought that leads directly to a contemplation of the Maker of heaven and earth. Nature is, indeed, the only temple worthy of the Deity. There is a mute eloquence in her smile; a majestic severity in her frown; a divine charm in her harmony; a speechless energy in her silence; a voice in her thunders, that no reflecting being can resist. It is in such scenes and seasons, that the heart is deepest smitten with the power and goodness of Providence, and that the soul demonstrates its capacity for maintaining an existence independent of matter, by abstracting itself from the body, and expatiating alone in the boundless regions of the past and the future.

As I continued strolling forward, there gradually came a perfect calm—and even the aspen-tree whispered no more. But it was not the deathlike calm of a winter's night, when the northwest wind grows quiet, and the frosts begin in silence to forge fetters for the running brooks, and the

gentle current of life, that flows through the veins of the forest. The voice of man and beast was indeed unheard; but the river murmured, and the insects chirped in the mild summer evening. There is something sepulchral in the repose of a winter night; but in the genial seasons of the year, though the night is the emblem of repose, it is the repose of the couch, not of the tomb—nature still breathes in the buz of insects, the whisperings of the forest, and the murmurs of the running brooks. We know she will awake in the morning, with her smiles, her bloom, her zephyrs, and warbling birds. "In such a night as this," if a man loves any human being in this wide world, he will find it out, for there will his thoughts first centre. If he has in store any sweet, or bitter, or bittersweet recollections, which are lost in the bustle of the world, they will come without being called. If, in his boyish days, he wrestled, and wrangled, and rambled with, yet loved, some chubby boy, he will remember the days of his childhood, its companions, cares, and pleasures. If, in his days of romance, he used to walk of evenings, with some blue-eyed, musing, melancholy maid, whom the ever-rolling wave of life

dashed away from him for ever—he will recall her voice, her eye, and her form. If any heavy and severe disaster has fallen on his riper manhood, and turned the future into a gloomy and unpromising wilderness; he will feel it bitterly at such a time. Or if it chance that he is grown an old man, and lived to see all that owned his blood, or shared his affections, struck down to the earth like dead leaves in autumn; in such a night, he will call their dear shades around, and wish himself a shadow.

It is just clearing up; and Oliver, as usual, is in the fidgets to set out—so good bye; and for fear you will think I have been indulging my imagination at your expense, about Mrs. B——'s in the mountains, I mention her name, that you may find out the place next summer, and see with your own eyes, and sleep within hearing of one of the most musically melancholy, murmuring brooks in all the Alleganies.—Good bye.

LETTER XXIV.

DEAR FRANK,

YOU may chance to recollect, in one of my former letters, I warned you Oliver would ere long break out into an ebullition of geology, occasioned probably by the subterraneous heat of Dr. Hutton's theory, which has already performed such wonders. The expected eruption took place the day before yesterday.

We passed from the little retreat in the mountains I gave you a sketch of in my last, through a country of most singularly romantic aspect. The hills became more rugged, barren, and broken, than any we had yet crossed; the declivities more abrupt; and here and there bare and prodigious masses of rocks were piled on their tops, or hung on their sides. Often we rode along the banks of little rivers, foaming at the depth of a hundred

feet below; their sides in many places composed of dark limestone rocks, piled one ledge on another, with the regularity of art, and topped with moss or fern. Cascades, with beautiful basins at their foot, fit haunt for the trout and the Naiad, succeeded each other at every little distance, and the whole scene was calculated to awaken the most lofty and affecting musings. I, who fortunately have never seen Dovedale, Matlock, the lakes of Cumberland, the Welch hills, nor any of those famous places that make such a figure in the pretty picture-books we buy here with such avidity—because we have nothing beautiful, it would seem, in our own miserable country—I enjoyed this succession of interesting objects, and fell into an enormous brown study. But Oliver, who, ever since he became a geologist, is much oftener employed in studying how this world was made, than in enjoying its beauties, ran his hobby-horse against my Kentucky pony, and unhorsed my imagination in a twinkling.

Do you believe in Hutton, or Werner? said he.

B. I believe in Moses and the prophets, replied I.

O. Yes, as to all that sort of thing, we know—that is, we are willing to acknowledge we believe the world was orginally made in six days;—but every appearance indicates that the present is a sort of secondary world, made out of the fragments of the first.

B. O, certainly,—like a giblet pie, from the fragments of a roasted goose.

O. Pshaw! Can't you be serious on a serious subject? Every man ought to feel an interest in the formation of the planet on which his lot is cast,—the place of his birth, and of his grave. In my opinion, nothing can afford a more noble, as well as useful exercise of the mind, than studying the formation of the earth.

B. Assuredly.—"Knowledge is power," said the great Ham—I beg pardon, Bacon; and there is very little doubt but that, in the regular progress of science, the knowledge of how the world was formed, will shortly be followed by the art of making worlds for ourselves—if we can only find the materials.

O. Confound it! be serious for once;—every man has a right to his hobby, and mine is certainly as innocent and inoffensive as any other.

B. Aye, and as useless;—but come, for once I will be serious. Open your theory, either Neptunian or Plutonian; and let the internal fire be as hot as it may, I'll not flinch one jot, I promise you.

O. I was going to observe that the country we are now passing through affords strong appearances of its having been formed at a later period than many other parts of the world I have seen.

B. That is quite likely.—All the learned call this a new world; and these indications of a later origin will be easily accounted for on the supposition that America was made the sixth day, and is consequently just five days younger than the other three quarters, which makes a considerable difference. But I promised to be serious; and though, to confess the honest truth, I think that until the learned can tell us a little more on the subject of world-making, they have no business to pester us with their conjectural nonsense, but had better leave us to honest ignorance and the Bible: still I will try and keep my word. I have a great respect for science, but I can't help thinking useful science is preferable to that which has no use.

O. Well, even admitting the science of geology to be altogether useless, you can't deny but that it leads to various discoveries in mineralogy that may be highly beneficial to the world. Geologists, in searching for what is beyond their reach, may still hit on something of infinite value.

B. Certainly,—

> "*A* was an archer, (or geologist) and shot at a frog,
> But missing his mark, shot into a bog :"

Which accident, as I have been credibly informed, led to the first discovery of bog ore. But to be serious,—and may all the powers of philosophy and dulness assist me in the task—I am seriously of opinion, that until you and your philosophers are a little more informed, you had better not throw out objections that, at least, *appear* calculated to weaken our belief in the authority of a good book, every part of which, we are taught to believe, rests on the same basis of eternal truth. It seems to me better that we should be ignorant of the true art of making worlds, than that we should lose our confidence in the Bible. The Bible says the world was made in six days, and the Scripture chronology gives it an antiquity of

about six thousand years. Now it is of little consequence that we should believe in Hutton or Werner; but it is of great moment that we should believe in an authority which cannot be doubted without endangering a religion carrying with it the purest system of morals ever promulgated to mankind.

O. But is the search after truth to be checked by the fear of discovering unwholesome truths?

B. Certainly, where the discovery of truths leads to no practically beneficial end, upholds nothing but a theory, and at the same time overthrows a long-established and salutary belief. If, by discovering how this world was made, you could make a better one, the search would be a respectable occupation enough. As it is, I see very little use in Dr. Hutton's theory, or Monsieur Cuvier's dry bones and fossils. I think they would be much more usefully employed in some honest calling.

O. Now, I suppose, you'd have those great men turn cobblers, or pastrycooks, instead of enlightening the world by their profound researches.

B. Enlightening a fiddlestick, Noll! Do you

call it enlightening the world, to undermine its faith, indirectly, and set mankind afloat in an ocean of doubts, without rudder or compass? We believe the world was made in six days, by the only Being capable of making it: and I see no good to result from mere conjectures which never can be put to the test of truth, and whose falsehood is only to be demonstrated by their palpable and enormous absurdity. Have your philosophers brought to perfection all the useful sciences, that they thus waste their lives in the pursuit of shadows, and challenge the world to admire their dexterity in chacing—nothing? Notwithstanding your pious indignation, I still think they had better learn to make shoes and pastry. A shoe is good for something, and is truly a philosophical production; for it is a combination of means to *ends;* and, for my part, I greatly prefer the works of the pastrycook to those of Dr. Hutton. If you penetrate the crust of the former, ten to one you find something exceedingly savoury and agreeable; but wo be to him who lifts the crust of the Doctor's theory, for he will encounter an "internal fire" that melts rocks in a twinkling, and ejects them as a liquid, right out of the earth, like

the sweetening of an overbaked pie, where they cool in the form of the Palisados on Hudson's river —as I am credibly informed. But as I am but a novice in world-making, be good enough to give me the most approved recipe for making a good, responsible, merchantable world, such as will pass muster in the Reviews.

O. Allons! Will you have it made by fire or water?

B. O, by fire, by all means, as that seems the most difficult of the two.

O. Perhaps not. You shall see how easy it is. Dr. Hutton lays it down as the basis of his system, that there is a regular operation of two great influences in all the changes of nature,—decay and renovation. The more hard and solid matter always wearing away under the influence of the powers which operate upon it.

B. Aye, that is reasonable enough.—I remember my grandmother's tongue was as active as ever, when she had not a tooth in her head. Here is analogy demonstrative.

O. Be quiet!—Air and water are the two active agents; earth and rocks, being quiescent, are the objects to be acted upon,—consequently, in pro-

cess of time, they will decay under the perpetual action of these agents, and their decayed fragments will roll incontinently down into the sea, and be deposited in its unfathomable abyss.

B. Well, what is to be done with them after we get them there, where I am willing to let them roll; although I can't help laughing to think what an enormous roll some of them must have had, up hill, to get to the ocean. This is contrary to all rules of gravity, and very naturally overcomes mine.

O. Now comes the sublime part of the business. At a prodigious depth in the mineral regions of the earth, the Doctor has discovered a great internal fire, or blacksmith's shop, where the wrecks of the former world are worked up like old iron, into strata of different kinds, by this singular heat, which first melts, and then consolidates, the different masses of matters that the air and water first generated by their action,—which then rolled down into the sea, and at last got somehow or other into the region of internal fire, to be remanufactured.

B. Good. Go on.—But first, with submission let me ask how it happens, that this internal heat

which melts granite and other trifling things, don't melt the whole earth in a little time, or at least overheat it to such a degree, that it would be very uncomfortable for the little children to walk on it barefoot?

O. O, that is easily enough explained. The internal fire being at a prodigious depth, is compressed to such a degree by the incumbent matters, that none of it can become volatilized, and consequently none escape. To this peculiar excellence of the Doctor's fire it is owing, that the general rule with respect to the diffusion of heat over a whole mass until there is a perfect equilibrium, does not apply.

B. Good. But where does the Doctor get sufficient fuel to keep up this internal, or rather eternal fire? I don't exactly comprehend where he can find a reservoir sufficiently extensive to supply this enormous consumption of combustible matter.

O. The subterraneous fire is supplied with its materials by the vegetable bodies growing on the surface of the earth, a source unlimited and inexhaustible.

B. See now what it is to be a philosopher. I never knew that the decomposition of vegetables was good for any thing but to enrich the land on which they grew—thus piously giving back to mother Earth the nourishment received. How sublime—to think, that if it were not for rotten cabbages and the like, we should never have had this beautiful, beautiful world! However, you have fairly made your world—and——

O. Stay, I have not done yet—there is the perpendicular strata; would not you like to know how they came to be standing bolt upright in the manner you see? This is one of the effects of the subterraneous fire. Its expansive power being exerted with extraordinary force, proved sometimes too strong for the crust of the earth, which opened to let the red-hot lava out. This being projected with prodigious force, rose to a great height, and cooled itself before it had time to get down again. This *must* have been the cause which elevated these strata, "because no other cause can be assigned adequate to the production of this effect."

B. Not even infinite power?

O. Pshaw—that is unphilosophical. But what are you laughing at now?

B. I was laughing to think what a time the good Doctor had while he was in a state of gestation with this red-hot theory. With that internal fire in his brain, the poor gentleman must have been worse off than the man in the Curse of Kehama, who carried "a fire in his head, and a fire in his tail," I believe. What a hissing there must have been, and what a prodigious thickness of skull the Doctor must have had, to *compress* this fire of his brain so as to prevent its singing his reverend wig! Like Jupiter, his brain was pregnant with a prodigy, but it was not a Minerva. But, now I think of it, let me ask you two questions, before we stop to rest—for I see the steeple of F—— Church yonder on the hill. The first is, how granite, being, as you have told me, a primeval rock, is so often found on strata of later formation at the summits of mountains?

O. For this simple reason—this part of the world was formed first.

B. O—then the world grew downwards, like a cow's tail, I suppose. That never struck me be-

fore, and accounts for various matters otherwise unaccountable, according to the new theory. My next question is this. As the Doctor's theory only proves that the present world is a giblet-pie made out of the fragments of another—be so good as to tell me how the first world of all was made, since the present system only goes to make a *secondhand* world?

O. God only knows.

B. See then what all your learning and research comes to at last. A fig for Doctor Hutton and Monsieur Cuvier, say I.—Let's talk a little sense—what do you think of the noble art of brickmaking.

O. Well, well, you may sneer at M. Cuvier and the Doctor; but you must allow that the former is one of the most sagacious men of the age. Can any thing equal the reasoning on which his system of comparative anatomy is founded? What is so conclusive as the following deductions? "If the *viscera* of an animal be so organized," says he, "as to be only fitted for the digestion of flesh, the jaws must be fitted for devouring prey; the claws for seizing it; the teeth for cutting it up;

the limbs for pursuing it, and the senses for discovering it at a distance." Can any thing be more clear?

B. As clear as *mud*—as we used to say of Doctor ——'s metaphysics. Ignorant people might say, indeed, from their own experience, that many animals of prey, whose *viscera* accords solely with the digestion of flesh, have neither limbs for procuring their prey, nor senses to discern it at a distance, nor teeth for cutting it up; that they lay still, and let their prey come to them, and swallow it whole. However, this is nothing against a theory. M. Cuvier's has two legs yet left to stand upon, and that is enough in all conscience.

O. But still you can't deny the ingenuity and sagacity of the deductions, even granting some of them are not true.

B. It is nothing to what I have read and heard of. What think you of Touchstone's conclusions? "If thou never wast at court, thou never sawest good manners; if thou never sawest good manners, then thy manners must be wicked—and wickedness is sin—and sin is damnation. Thou art in a perilous way, shepherd."

O. Pooh—nonsense.

B. Or what think you of the sagacious logical deduction, or induction, of a friend of mine, who, one night just as he was going to rest, saw what he supposed the foot of a man under the bed. If, quoth he, there is a foot there must be a leg to it —if there is a leg there must a body—if a body, a head—and if a head, it certainly must be a robber. So he manfully laid hold of it, and actually drew out a cobbler's last.

O. Pshaw—pish—pooh—nonsense.

B. Or what do you think of the sagacious logic of a Missouri Indian, I have heard tell of? He was sent out by an officer commanding one of our most remote frontier posts, to gain information of a hostile party of Indians, supposed to be lurking in the neighbourhood of the white settlements. After an absence of several days he returned with the following information: That there had been a party of hostile Indians very near the settlement —who wore new blankets, came from a great distance, but had gone away some days ago. "Did you see them?" said the officer. "No." "How did you discover all this?" "I knew," said the sagacious warrior, "they had been close in with the white settlements, because I found the heads of

hogs at a great distance, that had their skulls broke. The hogs had their noses rung, which shows they belonged to white men; and their being knocked on the head, instead of shot, shows that they were afraid of killing them, as is their custom, by firing a gun, lest they should alarm the settlement. I knew they had new blankets, for the wool which stuck to the branches where they had passed was white and long; and I knew they had come from a great distance, and had gone away, because I could see their tracks were those of moccasins almost worn out, and that the footsteps were made many days ago." This would have been the man for a theory, if he had only been brought up to the business of a geologist, or comparative anatomist.

After this our dialogue assumed a desultory form. We debated stoutly about the immutable laws of nature, and the inseparable connexion between the *viscera*, legs, teeth, nose, eyes, mouth, &c. of all animals, known and unknown. Oliver maintained that one instance in support of a theory, however incomprehensible, was as good as a thousand, provided there were no facts to controvert it. He was enormously nettled, when

I asserted that what the philosophers called the immutable laws of nature were nothing but laws which they had imposed upon her for their own private views, and founded on a most limited knowledge of her operations, since at least two-thirds of the habitable globe had never been scientifically developed. They of course could know little of these matters, and no doubt often scandalized a regular production of nature as a *lusus natura*, when in fact it was a distinct variety of a species, of which they had happened to see only one specimen.

Oliver insisted it was unphilosophical to argue against any system, by adducing what was unknown, to overthrow conclusions drawn from what was known, though ever so little. To this I answered, that as it was a notorious and acknowledged fact, that even philosophers were ignorant of at least a hundred times as many matters as they were acquainted with—it was much more rational to draw conclusions from their ignorance than their knowledge, although they had laid down a contrary rule to suit their own purposes. To this Oliver answered by a most emphatical "Pooh." The conversation

resolved itself into a dead silence, and if I am caught in such another, may I be obliged to tell how oysters get to the tops of mountains.

We got to F—— some time before dinner, and took a ramble about the town, the result of which you shall have some other time. I have written this enormous epistle at three different sittings, and it has cost me three diabolical pains between the shoulders, which Oliver says is a sign of the liver complaint. Good bye. Go get thee books, and study geology; it is your only science for a gentleman, for it is entirely useless; and a man can get the reputation of a scientific scholar by it, sooner and easier than in any other way, except by studying chymistry in the catechism. Adieu.

LETTER XXV.

DEAR FRANK,

JUST at the end of our disquisition on the art of making worlds, we came to a little town in the county of B———, so called after Lord B———, a worthy governor of Virginia in time past. It is one of the most picturesque portions of the state; and the earth seems to have been in great commotion when she finally settled her atoms in these parts. It abounds in iron-ore, and is finely watered by the different branches of James river, which are here called creeks, but in any other country would aspire to the title of rivers.

This town, like Rome, is situated on several little hills, and has a stream running nigh, pretty nearly equal to the Tiber, only not quite so muddy, except when it rains. From thence you have a full view of the far-famed Peaks of Otter, tower-

ing high above the surrounding mountains; one rising to a point, the other flattened at the top. From the former, which is the highest of the two, I am told the prospect is exceedingly extensive, various, and magnificent. We were inclined to try the ascent—Oliver, to see if he could find any oyster-beds, and I to see what was to be seen; but relinquished this undertaking on the score of distance and difficulty; the mountain being fourteen miles out of our way, and the ascent laborious. There is no enjoyment to be gained at the summit of a mountain, when one gets there half tired to death. The cost is generally more than the gratification, although people who take the trouble, don't like to acknowledge themselves disappointed.

While dinner was getting ready, we strolled about the town to look for curiosities; but unless one is a scientific traveller, he will be at a loss to find matter to fill up a letter in our country, unless he tells over again the same stories that have been a hundred times repeated already. A scientific traveller, like you know who, can talk a full hour about a stone picked up in the road, or a plant plucked from the side of a ditch. It is only to

call it schistus, quartz, talc, calcareous, argillaceous, or granitic, if it be a stone; or juniperius virginiana, yucca alofolia, corypha umbraculifera, or nigra oblonga, if it be a plant; and the reader becomes wonderfully interested in stones and plants, that he has seen every day of his life, but without knowing they were of such infinite consequence. After thus christening them with a long Latin name, the scientific traveller looks into the Encyclopedia, for the article Botany, or Mineralogy, and borrows enough to astonish every body with his learning, and make a notable paper for the transactions of one of the numerous societies to which he belongs. But to a traveller unacquainted with the secret of being learned without knowing any thing of the subject, it is a sad drawback, that almost every thing he sees in our country indicates a rapid advance, rather than a state of decay. Consequently there is nothing that makes amends for its present insignificance, by its ancient renown, or which the dapper spruce gentleman traveller can tell over again for the hundredth time. There are no old castles to conjure up the recollection of William the Bastard's time, when the old barons had more manors than manners—

oppressed the people, rebelled against the king, and drank small beer for breakfast. Indeed, your traveller in the old countries has a great advantage over those of the new world. The latter have nothing but what they see to describe, and nothing but what they think and feel to record; whereas the former can make a book of travels, good enough for his readers, without either seeing or thinking at all. Every town through which they pass, has a regular history, called a "Picture," written expressly for his particular use. In these you will find the history of the dead and the living; descriptions of all the tombs in all the church-yards, visible and invisible, past and present; biographical notices of Messrs. Tom, Dick, and Harry, together with their illustrious cotemporaries, Tag, Rag, and Bobtail, and all their posterity. In addition to these valuable and interesting particulars, he is furnished with a regular list of the bishops, mayors, abbots, aldermen, sextons, church-wardens, grave-diggers, and catchpoles, for at least a thousand years. This assortment is completed by a list of various other articles too tedious to mention, as the grocers say in their advertisements. Out of all this, the greatest

dunce in the world, that is to say, the traveller who sells his own land to go and see that of other people, can make a book which will be praised by the critics, provided it is written by a gentleman belonging to their *party*, or is published by the bookseller who patronizes their Review. It will also be most likely republished in this country, where all the secondhand finery, and secondrate literature of England finds a ready market. But the unlucky souls who travel in our country, unless they are possessed of the great secret of being scientific a la Encyclopedia, will find themselves at a loss for interesting particulars, unless they can enter into the various shades and peculiarities which distinguish one people from another, even though they are ever so much alike, which by the way is no easy thing. For want of this nice perception, which is one of the great characteristics of genius, those literary foreigners who have done us the honour to ride post through our country, have supplied the lack of antiquities, and the talent for observation, by resorting to their imagination for facts, and to their memory for good stories and rare adventures, that have happened

regularly to every one of them from time immemorial.

Of all countries in the world, this therefore is the worst for a book-making traveller, and itinerant poet. Ruins inspire both the one and the other; and a ruined tower or ivied hall is as good as six pages to each. Traditionary antiquity gives interest to the smallest trifles; and the most insignificant persons become objects of interest by living a long time ago, just as old Jenkins became immortalized, by living longer than other people. Until, therefore, we have a good number of ruins, with subterranean passages, and "Donjon Keeps," for our poets to commit murders, and our travellers to locate legends in, I despair of our excelling in these *articles;* as our friend the dry-good merchant calls poets and travellers.

This being the case, my learned friend—for learned thou art by this time, if thou hast read all my letters, we found very little to interest us at this place, except here and there in the outskirts of the town, a ruined log-cabin, deserted for a better, or abandoned for the western country. It would puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer to make a

romance out of a log-hut; but by a rare good luck I met with a legend, the subject of which is as follows:

When George the First was imported from Hanover, to take possession of the English crown, as usual a crowd of his poor relations accompanied him, to get a slice of Johnny Bull's roast beef, which was rather more plenty then than it is now. Among these was a sad fellow called Kierst Von Guelph, who, by the time he had been half a year in England, had committed so many foul, and unnatural murders on the king's English, that for fear of a rising among the genuine old English, who took umbrage at his calling things out of their right names, he was sent out to Virginia, with a grant of land and permission to murder every word of the language in cold blood. When he arrived in this new world, he built himself a house of logs, the ruins of which are still visible; called his first son George Rex, in compliment to his great relation; fell foul of the language tooth and nail, and under pretence of being of the blood royal, claimed a right to make all the people talk High Dutch, the language of Adam, as he stoutly affirmed. But it is no easy matter to change the

language of a whole people, so he contented himself with turning it upside down. Thus P became B, and B became P, and D T, until the stoutest abecedarian could hardly tell which was which. Kierst Von Guelph lived in his log palace until he had fairly bedevilled the language, and his palace was near *tumpling* about his ears, when he gave it the slip just in time to save himself the trouble of building another. It was he, that demonstrated his loyalty, we are told, by calling so many places in Virginia, and the south, after the kings, queens, princes, and lords of his time, instead of giving them better, or leaving them as they were. Tradition says, he lies buried in the church-yard of this town; and this is rendered more probable by our finding a piece of gray free-stone lying there, bearing this fragment of an inscription, "*Here licht begraven K*——" and there it ends abruptly.

Be this as it may, this legend undoubtedly explains the true original cause why the majority of the people in the great valley, extending from Pennsylvania to Georgia, begin so many of their words with the wrong letter, a peculiarity which puzzled our friend the professor of all sorts of

sciences, to such a degree, that he would most certainly have lost his wits, had not Providence, wisely foreseeing how the poor man would be perplexed at divers times about nothing, benevolently made him without any.

A handsome new church is building at this place; another proof that our parson was mistaken when he told aunt Kate there was no religion in Virginia. I love to see traces of religion, for in its train follow habits of order and sobriety, that make some amends for the cant and monkish severity, attempted to be imposed upon us by so many of the beardless apostles of the present day; who in their zeal to put down the innocent amusements of life, seem to forget that vice, and not amusement, is the proper object of pulpit criticism. It is curious, as it is true, that among our aged pastors, whose years confer authority, whose whitened locks, and blameless lives, and long-established character, give them a right to speak with all the authority of experience and virtue, we find religion represented in the beautiful and alluring garb of chaste and innocent vivacity. As drawn by their pencils, she enjoins no stripes or sackcloth, nor calls for any sacrifices at her shrine,

but those of vice and immorality. But our beardless youth, when first they essay their powers from the pulpit, appear to think they must signalize themselves by some extraordinary innovation on the rights of their parishioners, or some new and stricter principles, than their liberal and virtuous predecessors thought sufficient for the welfare of mankind, here and hereafter. Experience has long since taught these aged pastors, that mankind must have amusements, or they will indulge vices; that by rendering the yoke of religion too heavy, it was apt to be cast away; and that overheated or overacted zeal was a more dangerous enemy to the church, in an enlightened age at least, than even the most inflexible unbelief.

The younger race of preachers, on the contrary, are heard to rail with a sort of senseless impetuosity, against all that adorns, embellishes, and sweetens the leisure hours of an existence, which at best is but a succession of labours. With an utter and monkish ignorance of human nature, they think themselves reforming it, by lopping away its flowers; and with an arrogance to which I feel too much respect for their calling to apply the

proper epithet, they call down reprobation on the heads of their aged parishioners, because they have permitted their children to partake of those amusements, and visit those places of polished recreation, heretofore considered innocent. Nay, I have heard one of these beardless reformers strike at the root of domestic happiness, by telling his female hearers they paid too much attention to household affairs, and too little to the church: thus attempting to elevate them to that true evangelical uselessness, which signalizes itself by neglecting every sublunary duty, and manifests itself in an affected contempt for this world, which, were it universal, would tear society asunder, and cast its dear and admirable elements to the winds of heaven. The Author of the religion of man, who gave reason to his creatures, and harmony to the universe, thought one day of the seven, if properly attended to, sufficient for the purposes of *public worship;* but our zealous and boyish reformers, it seems, know better. Nowhere in all the compass of holy writ is there any precept denouncing those amusements, that cannot by any fallacy of reasoning be in any way connected with abstract morals, or prohibiting the mind from

recreating, and polishing, and enlightening its original roughness and darkness. By whose authority, then, does arrogant conceited ignorance try to wean us from every thing that charms us in the works of genius, because it shames their frothy and vapid nonsense by its enchanting beauty, or because it is not a sermon? It is in this way that the preacher becomes the ally of ignorance, and that the mighty masters of literature are robbed of their crowns of laurel, to bestow on some production of Miss Hannah More, in which the most improbable fiction of imagination is coupled with the majesty of eternal truth.

These sentiments, were they known, would doubtless bring my orthodoxy in question, and scandalize aunt Kate, who, you know, neglects all her household duties, rather than not go to a night meeting. I care not: for no fear of misrepresentation shall prevent me from speaking my sentiments on this conspiracy against the smiles, and sports, and graces of the mind and body. I believe that the writers of the Scriptures were inspired, and can only lament that those to whose lot it falls to interpret them are not equally inspired; for then we should not have so many contradictory systems.

I am unalterably convinced of the divinity of religion; a thousand proofs of it are implanted in the nature of man: and it is not the least demonstration of its being upheld by an Almighty influence, that it continues to flourish and expand, in spite of the little support derived either from the precepts or examples of its new teachers.

Having two or three hours to spare till dinner, we rambled about the church-yard, reading the records of mortality, which, though every where confined to a few simple items, concerning a few insignificant people, are always interesting. They are the history of high and low; and none can read them without being impressed with a conviction that all are his brothers at last—for all die. He who moulders below was born,—and died; and whether rich, or a beggar, his short history is that of kings. The struggles of restless ambition, —the reverses of the great,—and the story of the wreck of lofty pride, we read as an interesting romance, addressing itself solely to the imagination: but when a monarch or a hero dies, he becomes our equal; his death is an example equally with that of the meanest mortal; and we here realize our common nature, and common end.

While poring over these tombstones, our attention was attracted by a long cavalcade, on foot, on horseback, and in carriages of various kinds, winding slowly over one of the hills at a distance. It came towards the church-yard, entered it, and stopt at a large oak, under which was a newly dug grave we had not noticed before. The people of the village were attracted by it, and came up, one after another, until there were, I suppose, two hundred, men, women, and children, gathered together. Without a whisper, except that of the oaks around, the coffin was taken from the wagon, lowered into the grave, and covered with earth. I never witnessed a silence more solemn and affecting; and beautiful as is our church funeral service, I will venture to say it never raised a feeling of more deep and awful devotion, than that which impressed the dead silence around. There was no need of saying "dust to dust;"—every clod of earth, as it fell hollowly on the coffin, proclaimed that; neither was any proof wanting that "man who is born of a woman," must die, for a thousand little hillocks around gave silent testimony to the fact. When the mound over the grave was smoothed with pious

care, a little buzzing ran through the crowd—and as it slowly separated, some ventured to talk about the deceased person, who was, I found, a Quaker lady, who died—as others die, of some common malady or other. She was neither a belle, nor a beauty;—no crowd ever followed her at a ball, nor could I learn that she had ever received a single offer of marriage, except from the person we had left still standing by her grave. Yet there was something in the story I learned of her, that affected me, I can hardly tell why, for it was not the least romantic.

It seems that her husband, in consequence of imprudence or misfortune, had several years before been confined in a prison for debt, leaving a family of eight children destitute. By the rare magic of industry and economy united, this woman, by her own labours, kept the little ones together,—fed, clothed, and sent them to school, until the gaol accidentally took fire, and the prisoner walked home. Here he afterward remained unmolested, for the virtues of his wife had sanctified his person. There is a species of calm, persevering, courageous, and unconquerable industry, that gets the better even of fate. Such, it

seems, was the industry of this valuable woman, and it was rewarded even in this world. She lived,—God bless her,—to see her husband independent, and to share many years of independence with him. She reared all her children, saw them honourably settled, and heard the old people say, that whatever had been her sacrifices for them, they had repaid her, by their dutiful affection, and exemplary conduct. Then, when she at last died, neither poet made her an angel, nor newspaper eulogy a saint; but the neighbours,—the *neighbours*, followed her to the grave without uttering a word,—and the husband and children stood round it with their faces covered.

Now if this little true story wants a moral, I think it will easily be found. For my part, I cannot help believing this simple Quaker woman was a more valuable being, and fulfilled her duties far more to the benefit of society, than if she had been a member of as many charitable societies as aunt Kate,—and had refused as many fools as a lady I once heard of in Virginia. I must own too, that I consider her silent, unobtrusive, suffering, fire-side virtue, as far preferable to the public and ostentatious newspaper charity,

which, in the present time, stalks bravely forth, and beckons every worthless vagabond to its shrine, from Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. Had all women been like our Quaker, there had been little need of these societies; nor had so many excellent ladies neglected their homes to prowl into the dens of profligate vice, and soil the purity of the female heart, by an habitual contemplation of the disgusting drama of human misery, brought on by human depravity. It is thus they increase, instead of diminish, the sum of vice and misery, by teaching idleness and profligacy to become more idle and vicious, in the certainty that in the last resort, they can live without either virtue or work, in this charitable age.

Do not accuse me, I beseech you, Frank, of a want of commiseration for the wants and woes of our fellow-creatures. I have lived long enough to know, that to relieve the wants of the deserving, without encouraging the wickedness of the profligate, is a very difficult matter; and requires a knowledge of the world and its corruptions, which I do most earnestly hope our mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters, may never attain. I have seen enough too of the world, at different

times, and amid occupations the most various, to convince me that nothing is so likely to make this a happy world, as for every one to confine themselves to the care of making the domestic circle around them happy. The exercise of benevolence, when too widely spread, is apt to lose sight of the centre in solicitude for the extremes of the mighty circle. Few people have either the means or the talent for producing a great public good, or ameliorating the situation of mankind in general; but all have a little sphere over which their influence is felt, and which they may do a great deal to make happy or wretched. Society is composed of these little worlds; and to make them comfortable is to create the happiness of all mankind. These observations apply more especially to women, who have always duties to perform at home, if they choose to attend to them; and who ought to leave public charities to men, who are acquainted with the innumerable masks under which idleness and vice levy contributions on society.

In truth, I have no opinion of this *gadding* benevolence in woman. She is a gentle household divinity: she is neither a Jove, to direct the

destinies of the world; nor a Neptune, to quell the raging ocean. She reigns over the happiness of man, not by leading armies, writing essays on suicide, or vindicating the right of women to be as vicious and immodest as men,—or by enlisting in a blue-stocking club,—or by diving into stews and beer cellars, to acquire views of vice, which the most virtuous woman cannot witness without soiling the purity of her heart. No, Frank,—it is not by such means that women become the source and sacred fountain of our happiness. It is by the exercise of those gentle female virtues that pass unheeded by the world; that excite no buzz of public applause, and cause no inflated biography to be indited; but which meet their reward in the gratitude of children—the smiling happiness of the domestic circle,—the lofty and affectionate estimation of the husband,—and the blessing of heaven. Such women may not perhaps get into the newspapers; but while they live, they will be the blessing of their home; and when they die, tears of bitter sorrow will be their eulogy; and their monuments, a crowd of neighbours and relatives standing silently weeping by their graves. Good bye.

LETTER XXVI.

DEAR FRANK,

I ONCE knew a pious old lady, who never saw or heard any thing in this world that did not put her in mind of Joseph in Egypt. Whenever any thing was told her, no matter what, she would take a pinch of snuff, and exclaim with a devotional air, "Ah! that puts me in mind of Joseph in Egypt." Nobody could tell why; but so it was; and so it sometimes happens with me—for seeing a picture of Joseph in Egypt hanging in the room this evening, it actually put me in mind of writing you a letter. By what concatenation or dislocation of ideas this was brought about, I have not just now leisure to explain, having other matters on hand.

We left F—— about eight days ago, and set forth up the great valley between the Blue Ridge

and the Allegany, which must needs be called a valley, because it lies between two mountains. It is however in every part too wide to accord with my ideas of a valley, and has mountains in the very centre of it. In addition to its various natural beauties, it contains the Natural Bridge, the cave I mentioned formerly, and leads to Harper's Ferry, affording thus as many attractions to the tourist as perhaps any portion of the United States. It is all limestone country; and where this prevails, the landscapes, I have observed, are always rich, variegated, and picturesque, and the earth fruitful. One day or other, when the roads in this part of the world shall become better, and the accommodations more comfortable, this region I doubt not will be resorted to from various parts, from motives of pleasure, health, or curiosity, by the idle, the invalid, and the fashionable.

After riding something more than a dozen miles, we struck upon James river, upwards of four hundred miles from its mouth, here a clear, deep, and gentle stream, navigable for large batteaux. We crossed it by a toll-bridge, and skirted it for some distance, till we came to a little town,

the name of which I forget. The sun was just setting behind a high mountain, which comes to an untimely end just as it strikes the river; and its last rays fell on the sides of another ridge, into which the river quietly steals, and loses itself just below the village. Boats were lying along the beach, and wagons standing on the bank, the conductors of which were exchanging various characteristic jokes, levelled at each other's occupations. It was the old story of Mrs. Grundy and Dame Ashfield over and over again. Walking along the bank in the dusk of the evening, we heard them discussing the various merits of canoes and wagons, and telling most enormous stories of being stuck in the mud, or shooting rapids, some of which I would tell you over again, but that a good story in a batteaux don't do to tell every where. We slept at the house of a good Frenchman, who keeps a store, and sells every thing, except his politeness, which he gives away to all like an honest fellow.

This is one of the many little towns we find in almost every part of this country, founded, I presume, upon *speculation*. It looks sadly like a ricketty bantling, especially about the lower ex-

tremity, where there are several houses that exhibit, in and out, the genuine livery of poverty. It is a shame to tempt people from the wholesome labours of the field, and the enjoyment of a moderate independence, by puffing forth the speculative advantages of some little nook or corner along the river-side, where a town is founded—upon speculation—grows for a little while with inauspicious rapidity—then lingers awhile between life and death, and then sinks into a modern ruin, leaving the poor, deluded adventurers high and dry on the shore, or rather steeped in poverty to the very lips. I don't absolutely say this is the case with the place I am speaking of, but it looks very *suspicious;* and I fear nothing but the modern *magnum bonum*, or philosopher's stone, to wit, a paper bank, can save it from going the way of all flesh. I would advise the legislature of Virginia to *locate*, as the phrase is, one of the contemplated litter of banks at this place, else, to use the words of Shakspeare, as Oliver does the classics—to suit my present purpose,

> The uncapt domes, the mouldering palisades,
> The unroof'd *temples*, nay, the globe itself—

I mean the *sign* that creeks before the door)
With all its store of whiskey, shall exhale,
And like a baseless dream of speculation,
Leave many a wreck (I mean of boats) behind.

I was roused early in the morning, but whether before sunrise or not, I could not tell, on account of a thick fog, common along these rivers, but which the lady of the house assured us was not unhealthy. All I can say is, it made me feel so aguish, that I began to comprehend the necessity of antifogmatics, very clearly, for a man in a fog. I'll tell you a secret, if you'll promise not to repeat it—I actually took a mint julap slily, while Oliver was cogitating over a piece of flint, which had stuck in his horse's hoof the evening before. I do believe he can see further into a millstone than most people. Thus prepared, I encountered the fog manfully, to oblige Oliver, whose impatience to see the Natural Bridge very naturally increased as we approached its neighbourhood. At about twelve o'clock we came to the house of a very merry and respectable gentleman, who cracks jokes, plays the fiddle, and condescends to entertain travellers, I believe more to accommodate the public than for gain, for he has a great

farm; and every thing around him gives token of a goodly independence.

Being now within hail, we set out before dinner to see the bridge, distant, they say, a mile and a half, though it appeared to me at least six. Our guide was a most ancient and venerable Hessian, who, to use his own expression, was "*rented*" out to the King of England, by the legitimate Prince of Hesse Cassel, to cut the throats of people who never did him any injury, and never certainly came in his way, being at a distance of between three and four thousand miles. For this pleasant and christian-like job, he received four pence three farthings per day, his Royal Highness the Prince of Hesse deducting one penny farthing from the sixpence paid him by King George for the *privilege* of fighting the rebels. The old man acted as some of the heroes of chivalry did before him, when young ladies used to go about tilting in armour, disguised. He first fought, and then fell in love with this blooming youthful land, and when the war was over quietly remained behind, leaving King George to settle the account with his master as well as he could. He is "high gravel blind," like Launcelot Gobbo's father, and, like a true

Cicerone, destroys the effort of a sudden surprise, by telling you that you *will* be surprised by approaching the bridge without knowing it. The consequence is, that you approach cautiously, and to the great mortification of honest Cicerone, are not surprised at all, by the suddenness of its appearance.

The late President Jefferson deserves the ill-will of every traveller in this part of the world, by having in his Notes on Virginia, a work now become classical, given a description of this bridge, so provokingly happy, so inexcusably correct, that none can expect to rival him, and therefore the less I say about it the better. All I will venture to say is, that as I looked down into the gulf from above my knees shook under me; and as I looked up, from below, at its sweeping arch, blue as the heavens that appeared above, and everlasting as the earth beneath, I was struck with a feeling of sublimity which no object I have ever seen had hitherto inspired. We cannot measure the extent of our feelings of the sublime, by calculating the dimensions of any object; it is the effect, and not the cause, that furnishes the criterion of sublimity; and there is often in the arrangements

of nature, something which produces a feeling independent of magnitude, and dimensions, either by its simplicity, its aspect, its appearance of eternal duration, or its immeasurable superiority over similar works of man.

This is peculiarly the case with the Natural Bridge, which unites all those sources of the sublime. Its simplicity is admirable—it is one single blue, white-veined arch, unbroken and unornamented; its aspect is that of severe and adamantine hardness—unbroken by a single fissure, and indicating a duration without aid—while its name and its uses cause a direct comparison between this lofty work of nature and the works of art erected for similar purposes. The result of this comparison, which crosses the mind quick as lightning, is a feeling of the sublime, more definite than that caused by the contemplation of natural objects, which do not challenge this direct and inevitable comparison with the productions of art. All the views of the Natural Bridge that I have seen are utterly deficient in conveying a tolerable idea of the general aspect and expression of this admirable scene, which seems calculated to mortify the pride of man, by proving that neither his

imagination or his art is capable of conveying even a remote idea of its majestic beauty.

Some *leaden* genius, I know not who, has erected a little wooden sentry-box on the top of the bridge, about the centre of the arch, and intersected it below by a canvas tube reaching from the top to the bottom, thus destroying the unity of effect both above and below. His object was to make *shot*, although I am told there is no lead within half a thousand miles, except what may peradventure be detected in that part of his skull where other people's brains are usually found.

On our return, mine host played us a tune on the fiddle; beat Oliver at backgammon; cracked a joke or two upon *Cicerone;* gave us a stout dinner, and packed us off right merrily on our way. By the by, a traveller ought never to laugh till he gets to the end of his day's journey, as there is no knowing what may happen by the way. A proof of this is, we got caught in a shower before we arrived at Lexington, and were in such a hurry to get there that we missed admiring a very charming country until next morning, when the fog was so thick, that I am credibly informed a west country wagoner, in crossing over the Blue

Ridge, ran plump into the face of the blessed sun, and gave him a sore bruise. This explains the veritable cause of the spot which has given so much uneasiness, as I perceive, to the supervisors of that glorious luminary. Farewell. I expect to find a letter from you at Staunton.

LETTER XXVII.

DEAR FRANK,

OUR worthy friend, brother Jonathan, though a pretty high-spirited independent fellow in most respects, has a mortal hankering after Johnny Bull's cast-off clothes. Whenever John throws off an old coat, or a worn-out pair of breeches, nothing will do but Jonathan must put them on, and strut about from Boston to Georgia, to show off his secondhand finery. So with my lady Mrs. Jonathan, who copies Mrs. Bull in all her fashionable equipments. This imitative habit is the strongest proof of a want of original genius that can be, and produces the most ridiculous inconsistencies, both in dress and in much more important matters. Ever since it was unaccountably found out there was such a wonderful resemblance between the constitution of an English hereditary

monarchy, and an American democratic elective republic, our political doctors draw all their nostrums from the practice of British schools; without considering whether the stimulating prescription that will serve to revivify for a while an old worn-out system, may not very likely prove highly injurious to a healthy and youthful constitution. It would be well for these statesmen, I think, to consider whether that system, the complete triumph of which has impoverished a people, and made a nation of beggars, is founded upon a basis of wisdom so immutable as they would lead us to believe.

It is an easy matter for a congressional orator to quote Pitt, or Burke, in support of his argument; —this requires nothing but a good memory. But it would be much better, though not quite so easy, to look this country in the face, study her aspect, her wants, her peculiar advantages and disadvantages, and then to form his political system on these; and not, as is the fashion of the times, on inapplicable precedents, and examples not possessing a single feature of analogy. Edmund Burke exhibited inconsistencies in his political opinions, that, if they do not impeach his

virtue, at least call in question his wisdom; for a virtuous man seldom,—a wise one never—flies to opposite extremes. In the meridian of his manlier intellect, when he produced the masterpieces of his genius, he was a friend to the rights of the people, and an opponent to the prerogatives of the king. But in his old age, when grown timid, avaricious, and poor withal, he changed his opinions, and fancied he had become wise, when he had only become unfeeling. Men often become wise in this way, by losing all the noble and disinterested feelings of youth, rather than by gaining any accession of wisdom. With some people, wisdom is only selfishness.

This dunce-like attachment to old standing rules, which time, or change of circumstance or situation have rendered inapplicable, extends even to inquiries respecting matters in which a man's own individual feelings alone are concerned, and which the tribunal of his own breast ought alone to decide. Even here Brother Jonathan must needs resort to English authority, and inquire what Edmund Burke did or said on the occasion, rather than consult his own feelings as to what is becoming in him to do. Nay, if Johnny Bull

becomes religious, brother Jonathan must become so too; if one sends missionaries to the Brahmins, the other must go about begging for the same purpose; if one affects to encourage the fine arts, the other must have his academies;—and if the one institutes Saving Banks for poor people that have no money to save, the other must say, "ditto to Mr. Burke;" and if it is the fashion abroad to make dumb men mighty philosophers, be sure it will take in this country. Those who laugh in their sleeves, are content to be silent, knowing that absurdities which, if let alone, would soon die a natural death, often become eternal by opposition.

But what renders all this mighty ridiculous is, that it is but secondhand finery, which we only get when they are sick of it abroad. There was a German shoemaker Jew, who turned Christian, it is said, and preached in London, to the great delight of the old ladies, and the old gentlemen in petticoats. They grew tired of his stupidity and ignorance at last; and now I perceive he has come to this country to try how his old coat will fit brother Jonathan. In no instance, however, is this propensity to imitation carried to such

ridiculous extremes as in the manner of dressing practised by Mrs. Jonathan, who has a most vehement desire to figure with Mrs. Bull, and the rest. Independently of the great difference in climate between our northern parts, and England or France, it is generally about three or four months after their invention abroad that Mrs. Jonathan gets the fashions. It generally happens, therefore, that the modes invented and adapted for summer there, become the dress of our ladies for autumn or winter; and so with respect to the other seasons. No wonder our dear little girls so often cover their friends with suits of mourning, and break the hearts of their lovers, by dying of consumptions. On some future occasion, I may perhaps trace the effects of this propensity for John Bull's old clothes, on our literature, where it is most important of all, because it strikes at the root of every thing we do, and say, and think, and feel. At present I have merely trifled on the subject,—but I have said enough to tire myself, and to raise a hornet's nest about my ears, if it were known I don't believe in Saving Banks, nor any banks;—nor in dumb philosophers,—nor converted journeymen Jew shoe-

makers,—nor, least of all, in the absurd idea that some half a dozen ignorant missionaries, who never performed a miracle at home, are able, without a miracle, to convert men from the religion of Brahma, fortified, as it is, beyond any other system ever devised, and become more sacred in the eyes of its professors, by a duration of which none can tell the beginning.

But I am getting a bad habit of digressing in such a desperate manner, that sometimes I have hard work to find what I ought to be talking about. It seems with me as it fared with Achilles, of whom it was foretold, that if he ever left his native home, he would never return.—So, if I lose my subject, I seem fated never to find it again, as the poor man in the Rambler, who rambled about in search of flowers, till he could neither find the place of his destination, nor that of his departure. But I am not without some excuse; for owing to the various causes I have touched on heretofore, a traveller could not possibly get along if he told of nothing but what actually occurred to him, and of nothing but what he actually saw or heard..

In reading the relations of old travellers, I am tempted almost to believe, that every thing in this country has been, for two centuries at least, growing downwards, like unto a cow's tail. The Baron la Hontan, who wrote in 1683, says, the Fall of Niagara was then between seven and eight hundred feet high.—" O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!" Nothing ever equalled it, except Adam's fall, the greatest I ever heard of. Father Charlevoix charges the Baron with being a baron of the order of Munchausen; but the good Father himself, who wrote in 1720, in order to shine, I suppose, by contrast, tells several matters of fact that require great faith in the reader to credit. For my part, I don't believe one of these, except the story of the eagle, who, now-a-days, I suppose, economizes his wood, on account of its growing scarce. He talks of rattlesnakes thicker than a man's thigh; of eagle's nests from which they got a full cart load of wood; of owls who cunningly broke the toes of mice to prevent the little rogues from running away, and then fattened them in hollow trees for their winter's food; of elks curing themselves of the epilepsy by scratching the left ear with the right

hoof until it bled,—and of other matters utterly *unswallowable*, as Doctor Johnson does *not* say. It was worth while to travel in those days, when a man had the country all to himself as it were. But now, the learned people will not believe any thing but their own theories; and the unlearned believe nothing but what is probable. As to yourself, I can hardly tell where to class you; for while you scout the idea of cats' sneezing being ominous of a storm, you believe in the Huttonian theory;—and while you deny that crabs grow fat at the full of the moon, you put full faith in the story of a shower of crabs which it is said once fell out in the West Indies.

The little town of Lexington, somewhere about which I believe I left myself in my last letter, is charmingly situated in the midst of a rich country, gently undulating like the waves of the ocean. Around it are many fine farms, and pleasant country houses, conveying an idea of that delightful repose, that quiet independence, which is so peculiarly the lot of him who cultivates the soil; and which, whoever knows when he is well off, will never be tempted to resign by the allurements of sudden wealth, or commercial glitter.

O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona novint—I forget the rest—says honest farmer Virgil, who, if he knew any thing about farming, was an exception to all the poets I ever knew, either personally or by report. This was all I could see of the country, just in the environs of Lexington; for it was raining, as I mentioned, when we arrived, and foggy when we departed. But I saw enough to convince me the landscape was beautiful. I saw in the town a handsome court-house and church, both of brick; a proof there is both Law and Gospel in Virginia, though aunt Kate don't believe a word of it. Farewell.

LETTER XXVIII.

DEAR FRANK,

AT S—— I received your letter, giving all the city news. It grieves me to hear of the increasing abominations prevailing in that goodly metropolis; which seems destined to be for ever the sport of fashionable caprices, and rantipole eccentricities. I am consoled, however, for a great many things, by the exemplary conduct of the ladies, who, I understand, are grown so *economical*, that they save nearly half the expense of clothing, by paring off the superfluities above and below. This is setting a noble example, and I wonder the economical orators in congress have not made honourable mention of it before now. But I suppose they will next session; for last winter, at Washington, I observed one of them taking particular notice of a lady not above half naked. The

account you give of aunt Kate diverted me out of all measure. You tell me, that not content with being already a member of six-and-forty charitable societies, she has lately got up one for the relief of the poor orphans, whose mothers have burned themselves on the funeral pile of their deceased husbands in the East Indies! If things go on at this rate, honest industry will ere long become a mere slave to the self-created necessities of the idle, and every beggar will have as many retainers to support his state and supply his wants, as a feudal baron. What business have men to be beggars in this plenteous land, where industry is ever the forerunner of independence, and poverty is so much the mere consequence of laziness and vice? I have heard of a fellow, who found his quarters in the State-prison so comfortable, that the very day after he was let out, he stole a turkey in the open day, on purpose to get back to the enjoyment of *otium cum dignitate*. I fear it is much the same with those who are only idle, and who become so much attached to a life supported at the expense of other people's labour, that they will never be brought to submit, except through sheer necessity, to the drudgery of working again.

That this is the operation of indiscriminate charity, appears in the enormous increase of charitable societies, which are totally unnecessary, unless the number of poor is increased in proportion. What other reason is there for this increase of beggary, except the new facilities of living at the expense of industry? Is the country impoverished? Is the country overpeopled? Are the avenues of labour choked up, or are the means of obtaining an honest livelihood diminished, that we thus see one city alone taxed 150,000 dollars a year, to support its poor, and twice that sum distributed through various other channels, for the same purpose? If these things go on, our cities will become saddled, in time, with a most precious inheritance of pauperism; for as the news of these promised lands spreads abroad, the whole country will be depopulated of beggary, and idleness, that will come from far and near, allured by the prospect of living pleasantly at the expense of other people. But enough of this beggarly subject.

In return for the interesting information conveyed in your letter, you ask me more questions than I can answer in six months. One of these has diverted me so much, that in pure gratitude

for the amusement it afforded, I will take it in hand forthwith. I am sure aunt Kate put it into your wise head. You ask me seriously if there are any churches in this part of the world; and whether people ever go to church here, except when they are carried to be buried? I did not mention to you my stopping the Sunday before last at a rambling village, where I was smitten with the sight of a little church, for the purpose of attending the service. I generally keep these things to myself, for I think that a man who talks always about his religion is pretty much on a par with one who does the same of his honesty. I would'nt trust either quite as far as I could see him. But I will now answer your question by telling you all about it.

You must know, that after riding about a dozen miles before breakfast one Sunday morning, we came to a village, at the end of which there was a little neat stone church, almost buried in a wood of lofty oaks, under which there was a green lawn without any underwood. It reminded me of an old familiar scene of early days, and also of a great duty; and after breakfast we went with our good landlady to church. The pew was

close by an open window, out of which you could see through the opening trees a little clear river. Farther on a broad expanse of green meadow —beyond that a far-fading mountain—and above it a bright blue sky. What a path for a man's thoughts to ascend to heaven! Nothing was heard but the chirping of birds, peeping sometimes into the window; or the cautious footsteps of the villagers, creeping up the aisle, until the service commenced.

The hymn was sung first, and began with, "There is a land of pure delight," &c. and was sung with that plaintive simplicity we sometimes notice in the ballad of a country lad, of a summer's evening. The appearance of the preacher was as simple as his discourse; and there was nothing to mark any peculiarity, except a Scottish accent that announced his parentage. There was no need of his proclaiming the beneficence, or power of the Divinity, for the balmy air, the glowing sunshine, the rich and plenteous fields, that lay spread around as far as the eye could reach, told of the one; while the lofty mountains, visible in every direction, proclaimed the other. He left the attributes of the Deity to be read in his glo-

rious works, and with simple pathos, called on his hearers to show their gratitude for his dispensations, by the decency, usefulness, and peacefulness, of their lives. His precepts denounced no innocent recreation, and I was told his example encouraged no vice or irregularity—not even the besetting sin of his profession, pride and arrogance. He ended his discourse without any theatrical flourish of trumpets—without seeking to *elevate* the Saviour by placing him above Socrates or any other heathen philosopher; and I believe without creating in his hearers any other feeling than that of a gentle quiet sentiment of devotion, not so high toned, but more lasting and salutary than mere enthusiasm. Another hymn was sung, and the audience came out of church, but waited on either side of the path outside the door, to shake hands and say how d'ye do, as is the good old country custom.

There was nothing certainly in all this, but what may be seen in almost any church, and yet it made an impression on me that is still pleasing and touching in the remembrance. I don't know how it is, but there is something in the repose of the country, and particularly in the silence and shade

of deep groves, that is allied to religious emotions by some inscrutable tie. Perhaps it is because almost every object we see in the country is the work of Deity, and every object common to cities the work of man. Though we do not make the comparison consciously, yet the result is the same; or perhaps much more forcible, because the impression is that of feeling, rather than of reasoning.

If I doubted the divinity of the Christian faith, which I do not, seeing as I do the influence of its pure morality, its humane, and benignant, and softening precepts, I would never whisper of doubt. Independently of the sad effects that would result from weakening the foundation of this system of morals, in the minds of those who have not capacity to perceive its importance to the happiness of society, and therefore follow it from a conviction of its divine origin, the attempt would deservedly end in disgrace and discomfiture. None but a vain and foolish man would, therefore, undertake the task of weakening the force of any of those beneficial opinions, which, if not founded in truth, are at least necessary to the well-being of society. The ignorant will oppose him from the

influence of an old established habit of thinking. and the wise from a conviction of the salutary effect of such impressions.

Nothing can more completely show the importance of religion, not only to the morals but the manners of the great mass of mankind, than the contrast afforded by a village where there is regular service every Sabbath-day, and one where there is none. In the former you see a different style of manners entirely. Instead of lounging at a tavern, dirty and unshaven, the men are seen decently dressed and shaved, for the purpose of going to church; and the women exhibiting an air of neatness quite attractive. Whether they go to church to pray, or pass their time, to see their neighbours and be seen, or to show off their Sunday clothes; it keeps them from misusing the Sabbath, and polluting the periods of rest and relaxation, by practices either injurious to themselves or disgraceful to society. Whoever has become acquainted with the nature of man, first by his own experience, and next by an observation of others, must be fully convinced of the importance of giving him amusements that are not vicious, and modes of relaxation that are innocent.

"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy"—so does it make him a dull and stupid man. Men, in truth, cannot always be employed; and those who are unable to supply the tedium of bodily inertness, by the exercise of the mind, will—I say *will*, amuse themselves in some way or other. If you afford them the means of attending church on the Sabbath—the most dangerous day of the week, because a day of idleness—whatever be their motives for going there, both their morals and their manners will be softened, by having some object for decency in dress and behaviour; and something salutary to attract them in the dangerous interregnum of a day of leisure.

Having answered your first inquiry, I shall take up the others when it suits my convenience; or when I have nothing else to write about. Good bye.

LETTER XXIX.

DEAR FRANK,

YESTERDAY we laid by at the little town of W——. It was court time, and two lawyers, the pick of the whole country round, were to take the field against each other, in a suit between a wagoner and a batteauxman, in a case of assault and battery. You are to understand, the beautiful river Shenandoah passes not far from this town, and is navigable for batteaux; while at no great distance runs the great western road, which is travelled by the west country wagoners—some of whom, you know, are "half horse, half alligator;" others "part earthquake, and a little of the steam-boat;" and others compounded, according to their own accounts, of ingredients altogether different from the common constituent parts of the rest of mankind. The batteauxmen are for

the most part composed of materials equally combustible; and the consequence is, that occasionally, when they meet, they strike fire, and blow up the powder magazine each carries about him in the form of a heart.

The history of the present contest, as detailed by the Counsel for the plaintiff, is as follows: One summer evening, when the mild air, the purple light, the green earth, and the blue sky, all seemed to invite to peace and repose, the batteauxman fastened his boat to the stump of a tree, lighted his fire to broil his bacon, and began to sing that famous song of "The opossum up the gum-tree." By and by a west country wagoner chanced to come jingling his bells that way, and stopping his wagon, unhooked his horses, carried them round to the little trough at the back of his vehicle, gave them some *shorts*, sat himself down at the top of the bank, below which the batteauxman was sitting in his boat, and began to whistle "The batteauxman robb'd the old woman's hen-roost." The batteauxman cocked up his eye at the wagoner, and the wagoner looking askance down on the batteauxman, took a chew of tobacco with a leer that was particularly irri-

tating. The batteauxman drew out his whiskey-bottle, took a drink, and put the cork in again, at the same time thrusting his tongue in his cheek in a manner not to be borne. The wagoner flapped his hands against his hips, and crowed like a cock; the batteauxman curved his neck, and neighed like a horse. Being, however, men of rather phlegmatic habits, they kept their tempers so far as not to come to blows just then. In a few minutes the wagoner swore "he had the handsomest sweetheart of any man in all Greenbriar." The batteauxman jumped up in a passion, but sat down again, and took a drink. In a few minutes the wagoner swore "he had the finest horse of any man in a hundred miles." The batteauxman bounced up, pulled the waistband of his trowsers, took another drink, and bounced down again. A minute after the wagoner swore "he had a better rifle than any man that ever wore a blue jacket." This was too much—for the batteauxman wore a jacket of that colour, and of course this amounted to a personal insult. Besides, to attack a man's rifle! He could have borne any reflection on his sweetheart, or his horse; but to touch his rifle,

was to touch his honour. Off went the blue jacket; the batteauxman scrambled up the bank, and a set to commenced, that ended in the total discomfiture of the wagoner, with the loss of three of his grinders, and the gain of "divers black and bloody bruises," as honest Lithgow says. The batteauxman waited till the moon rose, when he went whistling down the stream to carry the news of his victory to Old Potomac; and the poor wagoner went "to take the law," as a man says, when the law is about to take him.

The honest batteauxman was arrested on his return for assault and battery on the west country wagoner. It being you know the great object of the law to find out which party is in the wrong, the lawyer of each side of course labours to throw the imputation on his adversary's client. It appeared clearly enough that the batteauxman made the first assault, but it also appeared in evidence that crowing like a cock was a direct challenge, according to the understanding of these people; that to undervalue a batteauxman's sweetheart or horse, whether he had any or not, was a mortal insult; and that to insinuate any inferiority in his rifle, was an offence which no one could put up

with without dishonour. That such points of honour constituted the chivalry of these people, that no class of mankind is without something of this nature—that however low a man may be, there are insults he cannot submit to, without being disgraced among his equals, who constitute his world—and that to oblige him, in any situation, to put up with disgrace, was to debase his nature, and to destroy every manly principle within him. Trifling as this case may appear, it called forth a display of talent, and a depth of investigation as to how far it was possible, and if possible, how far it was salutary to attempt to repress the operation of those feelings which spur men in all situations to avoid disgrace at the risk of every thing, that gave me a high idea of the two advocates. They were both young men, new to the bar, &c. yet they spoke with a degree of fluency as well as self-possession which is seldom exhibited by our young lawyers of the cities, whose genius is too frequently rebuked by the presence of an audience they can hardly hope to please, disheartened by the supercilious airs of the elder counsel, or overpowered by the deadening sense of inferiority.

I am fully convinced, that the shortest as well as the most certain way for a young man of talents in this profession to attain to eminence, is to go to some newly-settled part of the country, where, in comparative solitude, he can discipline his mind, and cultivate the reasoning faculty without interruption; where he has neither bad models to imitate, or good ones to discourage his first exertions. To speak in public, in the presence of those we feel to be our intellectual superiors, is a task from which the timidity of genius will ever shrink; and can only be performed by minds hardened by practice, or insensible from natural stupidity. The result of this timidity on one hand, and hardihood on the other, is, that in the great cities genius sinks too frequently into hopeless despondency; while the strong-nerved blockhead, who despises the opinions of his superiors, not because he feels himself above them, but because he don't feel at all, rises, in spite of his destiny, to notice and independence.

The young lawyer, therefore, who would rise into consequence and wealth, before his head grows gray with age, would do well to emigrate to some one of the new States, instead of running

to seed in the cities, or supporting a precarious existence by watching the docks, to incite sailors to go to law; diving into stews for assaults and batteries, or haunting the quarter sessions to get a fee of five dollars from some wretched Bridewell bird. There they would take root with the first planting of the community, and grow up with the growth of numbers, wealth, and business. They would soon afford to take an office by themselves, instead of joining stocks, and hunting in couples like leashed hounds, as they are forced to do in cities, for want of gallant enterprise to emigrate to the glowing west, where talent and industry are the sure forerunners of an independent fortune and political consequence. Thus riches and honour beckon him to pursue—for whatever may be thought of these matters upon Change, it has lately occurred to me, in the course of my experience, that a Judge, or a Member of Congress, is nearly as important a personage as a President of an Insurance Company, a Bank Director, or even a rich Money Broker. To you, who have lately seen ten times the interest excited by the election of the Directors of the U. S. Bank that there was for the election of a President of the United

States, this may appear absurd. And so it would be, if all the rest of this country were like the great cities, where not only they worship the divinity of gold, but adore a spurious counterfeit in rags—where respect is paid to nothing else, and where the value of money is splendidly demonstrated by its power to elevate the lowest reptile to the rank of man, and to an association with human beings. In such a place, where nine-tenths of those with whom you associate, and whose opinions influence your's are more or less dependent for existence on Banks, a Bank Director may indeed be the depository of incalculable dignity; but where the invincible money-getting demon has not yet worked his way in the human heart like a worm in a chesnut, men derive their dignity, respect, and consequence from sources far more pure, noble, and elevated.—They must possess talents; and if destitute of principle, must at least affect what they do not feel, and thus pay homage to the shrine which they have deserted. Thus even hypocrisy may become useful by showing how valuable that virtue must be, the mere counterfeit of which is thus cherished and rewarded. Farewell.

LETTER XXX.

DEAR FRANK,

IN ranging up the valley from Staunton to W——, where I now am, we passed through a fine country of limestone, abounding in gay meadows, and pure springs, and bordered on all sides by mountains. The distance is about one hundred miles, and there are several towns in the way, which, however, do not exhibit any great appearance of growth or prosperity. They are generally the country seats, and depend in a great degree on the expenditures of those who are brought there by law business, and the employment given to the tradesmen of different kinds, by a circle of the surrounding country, of which each town forms a sort of centre. As new towns are founded in various places, this circle of course diminishes; and as new roads are made, or obstructions in the

rivers removed, the little trade they enjoy is carried very often in another direction. Hence it is that our little towns are so apt to grow up prematurely for a while, when they are all at once arrested in their growth by neighbouring rivals, or by a change given to the course of business, and often decay with the same rapidity they arose. The truth is that we have too many towns; and so it will ere long be found, if I am not mistaken. We have too many traders of various kinds, at least in the Atlantic States, who will ere long be obliged to turn to some other profession, or emigrate to the new States. It appears sufficiently evident to me, in the complaints we begin to hear, of the want of business and of employment among all classes of people in the cities, which is in some degree owing to the general pacification of the world, which has turned millions of soldiers into other directions, and enabled millions of people to supply their own wants, who before depended upon others. The people thus thrown out of employment in the cities and towns must emigrate, as I said before, or resort to new professions, or become paupers, and eat soup at others' expense. It is a shame to

our country, whose peculiar boast it was to be free in so great a degree from pauperism, to see the deplorable increase of this fatal disease, which saps the foundation of freedom, by creating a set of men dependent for their support, not on their own exertions, but the bounty of others; and, consequently, the mere tools of those who keep them from starving. These are the kind of people who make instruments in the hands of the rich for the destruction of freedom. Why, instead of thus hanging dead weights upon the industrious, are they not sent to some of those rich and fertile regions of the west and south, where land can be bought of the United States for two dollars an acre, and where the least degree of industry would insure their support? This would be better than keeping them about the cities in a half-starved state of dependance on soup-houses, and charitable institutions; and answer the true end of charity equally well. When once men have lost the honest pride which shrinks from receiving charity from any human being, they lose the best support of their nature, and the most powerful motive to exertion. It may sound harsh; but the

penalty of begging should ever be,—to be universally despised; in order to render it the very last means to which man will resort for his support.

But to return. I was saying, that we have too many people living in cities, in proportion to our farmers, who, after all, are the backbone of every country, whence originates its riches and its solid strength. At a time when every other class of labourers are crying out in the streets of our cities about hard times, and many of them forced to beg work, or starve, we don't hear of the farmer suffering any inconvenience; or if he suffers, you don't hear him complain. If it is urged, that the high price of all his produce is a sufficient reason for his not grumbling, I will answer, that he gives as high a price for what he must buy, as he gets for what he sells, so the balance is even. It is not this. It is because the farmers in every country, except one, where they have fallen victims to the accumulated numbers of commerce and manufactures, and to a system of inordinate expenditure, are the most independent of all men, and most emphatically so in this country. Here we have yet an unpeopled world, a blooming, and almost unin-

habited Eden in the west, whose bosom is opened to the industrious and enterprising, and where millions of men may set themselves down without creating a famine, since they will ever be able to derive from the earth more than is sufficient for their support.

Yet still our people cling to the towns and cities, attracted by the hope of sudden wealth, and despising the slow, yet sure, rewards of agriculture, which, without leading a man to inordinate riches, secure him for ever from the chances of sinking into beggary or want. The race of paupers receives no recruits from them; for in all my sojournings, I may say with truth, that I never saw the industrious farmer forsaken, "or his seed begging their bread." One great cause of the disproportion of numbers which I have noticed between the agricultural and other classes of the community, is the great system of paper money, which has struck at the root of regular, persevering industry, whose rewards, though slow, are always sure. For some years back, hardly a tradesman in our cities, and of late in our little towns (each of which, however insignificant, has

now its snug little bank) thinks of growing rich by his industry. No; he must get accommodations at some bank, and plunge into speculations: nor can you now go into a cobbler's stall without seeing a bank notice, or perhaps two or three, stuck up with an awl at the chimneypiece, to remind the honest gentleman that he owes a great deal more than he can pay. Thus is the axe laid to the very root of national morals, and consequently national prosperity, and the whole American people, farmers excepted, sunk into an abject subjection to banks and their directors.

This thing went on at first most swimmingly, while we were the carriers and smugglers of the world, and while this universal system of borrowing was supported by the facility of employing the immense false capital created by the banking institutions, which has been let loose upon us of late years without limit. But all at once, the opening for the employment of this borrowed paper closes, leaving the borrower in debt over head and ears. Then the reaction of the system begins. The banks are called upon to resume the payment of specie, which they can't do without

curtailing discounts—which they cannot do without ruining several honest people, who have made a great figure without ever having been worth a groat, —which cannot be done without throwing out of employment many labourers and mechanics whom these honest gentlemen paid with the money they borrowed from the banks. This is precisely the case that will probably soon occur,—when the farce of specie payments commences, and which will come probably to the following pleasant denouement: The banks will commence the payment of specie with great pomp, and perhaps some of them may muster a hundred dollars to jingle on the counter; but having the merchants completely under their thumbs by means of their power of granting or refusing those accommodations, without which no merchant now thinks of carrying on business, they will give the poor dependants to understand, that if they ever dare to ask for a dollar of specie from the bank, their discounts shall cease. Thus will the circulation of specie be effectually checked in the outset; the race of little twopenny rags perpetuated, and the great truth again be demonstrated, that no instance has

occurred where a bank that had once stopt payment ever resumed it again, except in the way it will probably be done here—by offering to pay specie, but at the same time annexing a penalty to the demand; which nine out of ten will not dare to incur. Farewell.

LETTER XXXI.

DEAR FRANK,

I HAVE often regretted that our young men, whose fortune it is to have leisure, means, and opportunity, instead of gadding into foreign countries, did not sometimes take it into their heads to visit their own. All that is worth knowing of Europe, may be learned from books; and it too generally happens that a visit to the celebrated scenes of antiquity, answers no other purpose than to diminish our enthusiasm, by substituting the impression of a dull insignificant reality, in the place of a glowing picture of the imagination. I do not find that these pilgrims to the shrine of the classics, return with more vivid impressions of ancient genius or magnificence; on the contrary, the only ideas they in general seem to have retained, are those of beggars infesting their way;

mule-drivers attempting every species of extortion; inns abounding in inconveniencies and fleas; and inn-keepers practising every act of imposition. In short, the labours and privations of the journey seem to have obliterated every agreeable or sublime impression from their recollection. Yet it must be confessed they have one advantage. They can contradict both history and tradition, as well as palm upon their hearers the most stupid absurdities, since there is no resisting the testimony of a man who has been on the spot, and seen with his own eyes, even though he should run counter to the best authorities, and relate impossibilities. A visit to Italy, besides, makes a man of course a connoisseur in all the fine arts, and enables him to abuse every thing in this country with great effect. It is like a degree at college, which makes a man a scholar in spite of his teeth, and confers upon the fortune-travelled youth, pretty much the same distinction that is obtained by the pious mussulman who visits the shrine of Mecca, and stultifies himself with opium by the way.

I dare say you remember H——, the son of the honest old mouser in ——street, who, after living

in dust and cobwebs forty years, came out at last a fine gentleman, by the aid of money, meanness, and ostentation. Nothing would serve him, but his son Dicky must go abroad and get a polish, for it was past the art of this country to do it; and so far the old man was right. But in order to join pleasure and profit, (two ideas the old man could never separate in the whole course of his life,) he got him made supercargo to a ship, and away he went. Dicky had never been ten miles from the city, and knew no more of the country than a Bank Director. He knew, however, I will do him the justice to say, the names of several inland towns, for he had seen them tacked to the names of some of the debtors in his father's ledger, which with the exception of the old man's bank-book, was the only book he had looked into since he left school. But Dick had excellent recommendations from several warm men on Change, and his father had given a grand dinner to one or two foreign ministers, who of course could not refuse him letters. Away went Dicky to Bordeaux, sold his cargo, pocketed the money, and hied him to Paris.

The first thing he did was to Frenchify himself with a little short-skirted coat, with buttons nearly as far apart as the pillars of Hercules. His letters procured him admission into the politest circles, which, to the credit of Paris, are always literary; and he had learned French, by the newly-invented patent method, in twenty lessons. It is to be observed, that among the learned on the continent of Europe, there is no country in the world which excites so much curiosity and interest as ours. To the mutual credit of freedom and philosophy, nearly all the distinguished philosophers of the age are friends to national liberty; and are now looking anxiously towards the United States, to witness the success of a great experiment, which is to decide, probably for ever, whether their theories of the capacity of mankind to govern themselves, are well or ill founded. It is here they feel that the question is to be decided, and not only their more enlarged benevolence, but their self-love, is nearly concerned in the result, which is to decide whether they are mere visionary speculatists, or grave and judicious teachers. They are consequently very inquisitive, with re-

gard to the situation of the United States, as a body politic. The scientific men, on the other hand, having exhausted all the novelties of the old, look to the new world for new facts to uphold, or overthrow, their own or others theories; and the polite will select a traveller's own country as the subject of inquiry, because it is one with which he is supposed to be best acquainted.

Dicky was of course questioned on these matters. Sometimes he could not answer; at others it was still worse, for he answered like a blockhead. The scavans took snuff at him; and the ladies pronounced him *ame de borce*, which was as far as their politeness would permit them to go. Dicky was *cut*, as the saying is, for among the learned, the witty, and the wise, a man who brings nothing with him, is very likely to take nothing away; unless he is a good laugher, and an intelligent listener; that is to say, listens as if he understood. But a man with the proceeds of a cargo in his purse, need not be without society, and can find friends even in Paris. Dick found a plenty who demonstrated their regard by liberally shaving his purse, letting him pay their bills, and calling him "a d—d fine fellow." To make an

end, Dicky came home at the end of two years, and old H—— was obliged to post the proceeds of the cargo to profit and loss. This so affected the old man, that he broke up his gentility, and went through a retrograde transmigration, by changing from butterfly to grub-worm, after having changed from grub-worm to butterfly. Nevertheless, Dicky became a person of great distinction in the beau monde, and has ever since decided on the affairs of France, with as little opposition as the allied powers do at this time.

So long as this distinction is attained to in society, merely from the circumstance of having been a year or two abroad, it is to be feared that our young men will continue as heretofore, better acquainted with every other country than their own; which of all others is best worthy of their attention, as of all others it ought to be nearest their hearts. The inhabitants of the United States, so far as I have had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with them, are that sort of people who, the more they know, the more they like each other; and it is a great pity that those whose talents, station, or fortune, give them an influence in society, would not go amongst each

other; receive and bestow those courtesies, that are the sure forerunners of hearty good will; and get rid of some of those silly and absurd antipathies that were engrafted on error, or originated in characteristic peculiarities, that no longer exist, if indeed they ever existed at all. I have seldom or ever seen two honest worthy men fall together, even under the most unfavourable impressions of each other, who did not in a little time come to a good understanding, and wonder what could have made them enemies. There is something in being *amongst* people, sharing their enjoyments; partaking in all the good things of the world with them, and being happy in their society, that few good people can resist; and those that can, are not the men for my money. For my part, the more I see of my countrymen, the more I like the honest fellows; and this I will say of them, I never was in any place in the United States, where I did not find friends and a welcome.

Independently of the gratification that would result from thus shaking hands, and becoming acquainted with our widely diffused countrymen, the domestic traveller would see various shades

of society he has never seen before, and contemplate civilized man in circumstances and situations in which he cannot be viewed in any other part of the world. I don't mean in our cities, for there is little diversity; I mean along the banks of the Ohio, the Mississippi, and their various tributary streams, where exists a race of men, active, hardy, vigilant, enterprising, and fearless as the Indian, with as much learning, genuine politeness, and various intelligence, as those who inhabit the Athens of America.* In all the grand and beautiful features of landscape, in variety of scenery, in every thing that constitutes the divinity of nature, this country is equal, and indeed superior, to most; and in no part of the world, perhaps, can the pure admirer of nature's beauties be more easily and variously gratified. Yet hitherto no American, that I know of, has thought it worth his while to traverse it with a view of correcting the erroneous impressions entertained by the inhabitants of the various sections, with respect to each other; exposing the misrepresentations of prejudiced, ignorant, or interested foreign travellers, and giving to his countrymen a picture of

* *Quere*—Philadelphia or Frankfort?—Ed.

themselves, such as would be drawn by a brother, who in telling their faults, would do justice to their virtues.

Had I leisure, opportunity, and another trifling requisite, I mean talent, I would most assuredly think of this task. As it is, I can only earnestly wish, that some one, better qualified than myself, would undertake it. If he did it as it ought to be done, he would confer a lasting benefit on his country, and ensure himself a reward, to which all other sublunary ones are nothing—a lasting and blameless fame. Good night.

LETTER XXXII.

DEAR FRANK,

IN the letter I received from you some time ago, which, by the way, is the only one I have got, in return for at least fifty of mine, you inquired if it was really the fact that the people of this part of the world were more hospitable than in ours? As I have leisure just now, and have seen nothing worth talking about since I wrote last, I will now answer your question in the affirmative; though, I confess, my *local* feelings suffer in the confession.

The mania of this truly philosophical age, is that of accounting for every thing we see, hear, or feel, upon philosophical principles; and as I do not wish to be out of fashion, either in dress, or any thing that is not actually bad or preposterous, I would proceed to account, as well as I can, for this spirit of hospitality, which, wherever it exists,

confers lustre upon a country. It is one of the finest of national characteristics; and it is in a great measure owing to this, that little Ireland, with all its bulls, and oddities, is still a sort of pet nation to all the world, except its stern stepdame, old England.

The truth seems to be, and it is a sort of libel on civilization, that in proportion as nations attain to a certain degree of what by courtesy is called refinement, they lose their hospitable habits; and the interchange of civilities then becomes, like almost every thing else, a mere matter of barter, among people who give entertainments, that they may receive them in return; the stranger does not partake of these, because he is not in a situation to repay them in kind; unless indeed he is of sufficient consequence to make his entertainment a matter of honour to his host. This effect of refinement on society, would lead me naturally to inquire, if I had time or patience, into a very interesting question, whether the acquisition of this refinement, by deadening or repressing the exercise of many liberal and manly virtues, does not in reality injure society, by taking away from the shirt to give to the ruffle? Perhaps I may give

you more of this by and by; at present, I must get on with the matter more immediately in hand.

It appears to me, that the progress of nations in arts, riches, and refinement, is exactly in an inverse ratio with the more liberal qualities of the heart; and that there is a happy medium, in which the human faculties as well as the human feelings, are poised in their nicest balance. Thus we find that certain high and heroic qualities are common among people called barbarous, because they do not pay quite so much attention to elegance of decoration, or mere personal comforts, which, if seen at all, are of very rare occurrence among those who arrogate to themselves a superior degree of refinement. Among those is that generous hospitality, which is practised among all nations, except such as excel in the fine arts, and value themselves upon their breeding; that is to say, upon a certain whimsical, artificial arrangement of certain empty courtesies, signifying nothing. All the nations of antiquity were hospitable till they became corrupt; among them the stranger was a sacred character, and to do him violence, or to refuse him shelter, was an offence to the gods. The only life the stern, unfeeling

politician Ulysses ever spared, was that of Heliacon, *because he remembered the hospitality of his father.* To this day, we find that there is ten times the hospitality in Asia, which is stigmatized as semi-barbarous, that there is in Europe, where what little we find, is among the poorer and less refined class of people. The Mahometan exclaims, "Allah! forbid I should receive money for entertaining the stranger;" the European gets as much out of him as he can; or if he is too proud to take his money, turns him from his door. In fact, to sum up all on this head—I do most heartily believe, that the money-making principle, which is at the root of what is called a refined state of society, since its operation affords originally the means of *purchasing* refinement, that is to say, splendour, destroys more of the high heroic qualities of human nature, than it can possibly make amends for in any other way; and that the frivolous distinctions which grow out of such a state of society, are utterly at war with the sublimer efforts of genius and virtue.

I have heard it often remarked in our part of the world, with great self-complacency, by portly traders and brokers, who fancied themselves at the

pinacle of refinement, because they had a splendid equipage and fine furniture; "that the middle and eastern States were at least a century before the southern, in refinement and civilization." Upon inquiring into the grounds of this notion, I found it uniformly originated in the vulgar practice of confounding mere personal comforts, and little domestic knick-knackery with the qualities of the mind, or the exercises of the intellectual faculty. Thus, in the eyes of stupidity, the fine coat makes the gentleman, all over the world. Now I am willing to allow, that in our part of the world they have better roads, bridges, taverns, &c. and that their houses are better painted, and their farms in better order, than in the south. I will allow too, that all these are good things; and that people are right enough in having them; but I cannot accept of these as the criterion of either refinement of manners, or elevation of intellect. On the contrary, experience verifies the fact, that the most lofty intellect, and the greatest heroism, is generally connected with an indifference to these little vulgar niceties and snug comforts. I have been among a certain class of people, whose farms were perfect gardens; whose

houses were complete in every respect, and withal well painted; and whose cattle were better lodged than many white men in other places. Yet they were the most stupid of the human race; destitute of almost every quality that gives dignity to our nature, and void of every intellectual gift except the instinct of working and saving money. Shall we say that these have made greater progress in refinement and civilization, than people whose cattle are not quite so well lodged?

The day before yesterday, we stopped at the house of a sturdy four-square Dutchman, who, we were told, entertained travellers, as is the custom in this part of the world. Every thing about him bore the appearance of comfort and competency, His house was large, his fences in prime order, his cattle looked like mammoths in the fields; his green meadows extended all around his mansion; here and there exhibiting a little village of haystacks; his barn was of stone, as big as an ancient Baronial Castle; and in his mouth he carried a pipe, three feet long, an indubitable sign of his being well to do in the world. I found the old man grumbling in a sort of subterranean tone, about the taxes he was obliged to pay to the go-

vernment, which he considered enormous. As I had all along been led to believe, that the taxes in this country were mere nothing, I was somewhat surprised at this, and asked him the amount he paid. "Fifteen dollars and thirty-seven and a half cents." How much land have you? "Twelve hundred acres." Does that fine grist-mill belong to you? "Yes." Are all the cattle I see yours? "Yes." How much wheat did you raise this year? "A little rising of five thousand bushels." Do you pay any tax on your mill? "No." On your cattle? "No." On your wheat? "No." Go to the d——l, thought I, for a grub-worm grumbler as thou art; but I was too polite to tell him so. While breakfast was getting ready by his two daughters, who were employed in this duty, while a younger one was tending a carding-machine in a little shed near the house, we talked a little politics, as usual; a subject about which every man in this country, that knows any thing at all, knows something; I found him as stupid as an owl, with no other idea of liberty, than what was connected with the most sordid contemptible feeling. He would not have cared if the social system had gone to wreck, so he could have saved

a penny in taxes. In short, he was one of those petty spirits whom petty politicians court, by prating about economy, and appealing to the most sordid feelings of our nature. In settling for our breakfast, this comfortable dog palmed upon us a bank-note of some distant Rag-Manufactory, which, after attempting to pass several times, I threw into the fire, out of pure revenge against the bank from which it issued!

It so happened that the very same day we slept at a house of a very different description, belonging to a man who, according to the phrase in our parts, was at least a century behind the man at whose house we breakfasted. He was what is usually called a tall slab-sided Virginian, with bright blue eyes, high cheek-bones, with not enough fat about him to hold his ideas by the legs and wings, as Peter Pindar says. He received us with a sort of nonchalance which would have affronted a John Bull hugely, and which, to say the truth, was not very inviting. However, after we had talked to him a little while about his farm, and patted the heads of half a dozen little chubby rogues that were running about, he grew very pleasant, and entered into a conversation, in which

he displayed a liberality of feeling, and of intelligence, that would have astonished people, who connect *comfort*, as it is called, with much higher matters. I asked him about his taxes; he merely smiled, and said they were so trifling he hardly knew what they were. While we were chatting, a Kentucky pedestrian with a knapsack, came up, on his way home. He inquired for lodgings with the manly confidence of a free-man, and was received by our host in the same manner, precisely, that he received us. Nay, with rather more courtesy, for I have always observed that the better sort of minds unconsciously bristle up a little, at the approach of those who, *perhaps*, may claim a superiority, which such minds are not apt to acknowledge by any exhibition of deference. I must confess, however, that this man would have sunk very much in the balance by which refinement is sometimes estimated; for his house was neither painted, or in fact finished; and I actually detected three old petticoats stuffed in the upper windows. Then his barn was built of logs, with huge wide cracks between them; his fences were a little out of repair; and I plead guilty to the fact, of his cattle having little more fat on their

ribs than their master. His house, too, was marvellously deficient in fine furniture, and we ate of one of the most plentiful meals I ever saw, from an oak table. When he found we did not take airs upon ourselves, he treated us with a sort of careless, manly freedom, at which once or twice I felt myself inclined to be a little offended, but which I have since reflected on with pleasure, as an indication of a mind, which even in a situation which, perhaps more than any other, engenders and fosters a habit of cringing servility to superiors, and low-bred insolence to inferiors, had retained its primitive independence. In the morning he was particular in giving us directions for our journey, and did not give a single uncurrent note, though I observed he had several, which had probably been palmed upon him by travellers, wittingly or unwittingly.

Now, Frank, get out of your city trammels, and tell me honestly, which of these two you think had made the greatest advances in refinement and civilization, and which stood highest in the scale of being? I know you will agree with me, in spite of the money-brokers, that the man with the petticoats stuck in his windows was worth an army

of the others; and would become their master, if it ever came to a struggle of intellect, or a contest of spirit. The truth is, that people who are very particular about snugness, and personal comfort, and insignificant conveniences, or trifling decorations, that add little to real enjoyment, are generally very selfish in their feelings, and stinted in their intellects.

In travelling through Virginia, and the south, I soon found that if I met in the country an exceeding neat, well painted, snug new wooden house, with every thing comfortable about it, I had better not stop there; it was no place for the traveller and stranger. No—I sought me out an old rusty mansion, uncontaminated by paint for many a year, whose owner had never been bitten by the money-making mania, and who had rather strangers would share the comforts of the interior, than admire the outside of his house. If I saw a broken pane stuffed with a petticoat, then I was sure of a welcome. It was like the banner of the ancient barons, which, when displayed from the castle, betokened that the lord was at home, and would receive all that came. At these "gude houses" one is always sure of a welcome unaffect-

ed and unostentatious; not the effect of a sudden fit of generosity, or given for the purposes of displaying to the eyes of a stranger the splendours of the house; but given without effort, as if it were not worth giving, and thus relieving the receiver from the weight of obligation. I have been at some of these places, and I hope in heaven I shall visit many more, for of all the characters I covet for my country, that of hospitality is what I covet most; not for the purpose of attaining to a name abroad, by entertaining men who have returned our hospitality with slanderous imputations, but as a noble disinterested interchange of kindness, and as a tie binding the people of this country together, and giving them as it were a home in every corner of this great republic, they may chance to visit. For my part, not even the most substantial benefits warm my heart half so much as the recollection of those kind welcomes, it has sometimes fallen to my lot to receive at a distance from home, and among strangers.

This liberal hospitality, to whatever cause it may be owing, is more general in this part of the world, than where we have been educated; and is owing to the people being "a century behind-

hand with us," in the sense I have just explained. They are not yet so debauched with the sordid money-making spirit, which, when it once takes root in the heart of man, is the *Bohon Upas*, that poisons the air we breathe, and kills every wholesome product of vegetation in its neighbourhood, creating a desert around. The time, however, seems to be fast approaching, when the *saving spirit* will pervade even the soil of Virginia, and the south; for there are actually instances of men selling their lands to become merchants and manufacturers, smitten by the imposing appearance of wealth and competency, exhibited by the dependants of banks. If this practice should continue, and increase, in a few years the race of old land-holders will be no more, and their places be occupied by spruce traders, who value money beyond all things, because it gives them a consequence nothing else can give; and who will sometimes give a grand dinner to show their silver plate. The ancient spirit of honour will then be extinct where it once flourished, and those who seek hospitality must go beyond the mountains to the new states, where it will finally take refuge. Money will then be not only virtue, but wisdom;

and the true satiric allusion of the statue, called *Hermathena*, which has puzzled the learned, be understood. This statue, you may recollect, represented Mercury, the god of thieves, lawyers, and merchants, and Minerva in the same body; alluding to the custom on Change, of making wealth and trickery synonymous with wisdom.

It often amuses me to see how a hap-hazard, neck-or-nothing voyage, which by some rare good fortune enriches a common-place individual, increases his reputation for talents. All the small fry look up to him; he begins to talk with great emphasis, but no discretion, about matters he don't understand; and his great talents are at last rewarded by being incorporated into a banking institution! It would seem, that the acquisition of riches is considered as unequivocal proof of great *cleverness*—which is the mercantile phrase for wisdom. But in my opinion, any man may grow rich if he pleases. It is only to become a slave to gain; to think, and work, and dream, for money, and to repress and starve every liberal impulse of the mind. Thirty or forty years sticking close to this, will inevitably make a man rich enough to consult his tastes or his passions, just at

an age when he has no tastes, and for the most part but one passion. This is what is called gaining the whole world and losing our soul—an exchange very common in this world. Good bye.

LETTER XXXIII.

DEAR FRANK,

AT —— I received a letter from you, dated almost a month ago, which I must answer forthwith. In the first place, you accuse me of hostility to English people, and English literature, because I speak, I hope, with becoming feeling, of the unceasing attempts of a great number of British writers, to injure the reputation of our countrymen and government in the eyes of the world. I disclaim the imputation of any other but defensive hostility; at the same time, I assure you, I am neither ashamed of feeling indignant at their calumnies, nor afraid of expressing my indignation. Whether abuse of the people of this country, its manners, morals, and literature, is a popular subject or not; or whether it assures to the calumniator the patronage of government, I

am not able to say; but certain it is, that there is hardly a newspaper or political pamphlet, published in that country, favourable to the ministerial side, that does not in some part of it contain a repetition of splenetic effusions against us. If the Reviewers get hold of an American publication, it is made use of merely as a pretext to calumniate us in some way or other; and one of the most celebrated of their Reviews seems to have been established for hardly any other purpose, than to libel America and France. It is called the Quarterly Review, and being rather an obscure, contemptible kind of a Billingsgate production, would hardly merit attention, were it not for its propensity to general and indiscriminate abuse of any body the ministry dislikes. In times less enlightened than the present, political satire and abuse was generally confined to newspapers and pamphlets, and the title of the article corresponded with the subject. It is the peculiar boast of this age, that criticism should have been enlisted into the service of party, and that a critic can now snugly vent his spleen upon a whole people, or party, in reviewing a book, which has nothing to do with the subject. What is perhaps still more

extraordinary, many of the most enlightened people of this country, do actually pay attention to the judgments of these impartial critics, and not unfrequently make up their minds, as to the merits of a book, on the decision of these competent judges. Don't mistake me, in supposing that I mean to say, their decisions are never founded on the real merits of a book; I will do them the justice to say, that if they have no particular antipathy to an author—if the subject of his work does not in the remotest degree affect the ministry, or go to advocate the abolition of the office of inspector-general of pipes—if, in short, the work has nothing to do with the favourite opinions of the Reviewer—it is just as likely as not, that he will give a tolerable judgment; provided he don't forget the book altogether, in the pleasure of hearing himself abuse the Americans.

Great Britain, as well as the more enlightened portion of this country, is now rent and divided into two great factions, marshalled under the banners of the two great Reviewers, one carrying the sway over Scotland, the other over England and Wales; the first, sometimes mistaken, but willing

to retract; vide Lord Byron; the latter, always tenacious in opinion, especially when he is in the wrong, and only to be deterred from the repetition of old calumnies, by the refreshing temptation of new ones.

This latter gentleman was once a cabin-boy in a Newcastle Collier; and I should disdain to mention this to his disparagement, had not he deserted his cast, and become the enemy and calumniator of the very class of people from whence he derived his birth, ever since he became superintendent of pipes, and wrote esquire to his name. There was lately in N——— a sea-captain, under whom the Reviewer served his apprenticeship, who told several amusing anecdotes of the little fellow. Among other matters, he mentioned his pertinacity, in sticking to a calumny, when once he had given it utterance, and the invincible obstinacy with which he resisted the application of a rope's end, which was generally employed to get the truth out of him. The honest captain moreover averred, that he was the ugliest, snarling, captious, troublesome little cabin-boy he ever had in his ship; and that his ungovernable hostili-

ty to the Americans, arose from his having once been terribly flogged by a Yankey sailor at Wapping.

To award that justice he has never awarded us, I will do him the credit to say, that amid all the disadvantages of his situation, he managed to cultivate learning, insomuch that he at length gained the notice of some munificent gentlemen, who sent him to the university, where he excited attention, not so much for being a great scholar, as being a great scholar considering he was brought up a cabin-boy.

Among those who were smitten with wonder at such a phenomenon, was Earl Grosvenor, a nobleman who, being immensely rich, had little occasion for any extraordinary portion of underderstanding. It struck his lordly capacity, that it was a most wonderful thing for a man, who was neither a lord nor a gentleman born, to have either common sense or common feeling. So he took him under his protection, brought him into notice, and continued his patron to the end of his life. The moment he got among lords, he began to assume all the airs of a man of high aristocratic birth, tacked esquire to his name, and on all

occasions expressed his utter contempt for democrats and common people. This is ever the case with men of low and grovelling minds, who are continually reminding us of their former insignificance, by their ill-bred arrogance when fortune smiles. He wrote a poem, now gone down to oblivion; one of those productions which acquire celebrity, not from their own merits, but the demerits of those they are aimed at. It gave the finishing blow to the miserable Della Cruscans however, and the embryo Reviewer strutted about in triumph, like a little school-boy, when he has made the frogs duck their heads and be quiet, by throwing a pebble in a pond; or more appropriately, like Don Quixote when he had utterly discomfited the wool-clad host of Trapoban. About this time he made a furious attack on the French revolution, while presiding over the anti-jacobin Review, where he played the part of "moonshine" to Mr. Canning, the sun by whose reflected light he shone. The next time he came before the public, was as the translator of Juvenal. In order to make room for this, he began by finding fault with all preceding translators; being, I suppose, resolved to raise his own work by

bringing others below its level. The harsh and overweaning arrogance of this preface, was worthy the editor of the Quarterly Review, which, if I mistake not, praised it, either from a fellow-feeling arising from similarity of character, or because the translator of Juvenal was at that time editor of the Review. The world has probably forgotten these circumstances; for it is a peculiarity of this writer that whatever he does, after having provoked a temporary indignation or contempt, sinks quietly into oblivion, or is only brought into public notice by some more heinous misdemeanor. He resembles a convict, whose petty rogueries are only brought to light by more serious offences, which at last bring him to the halter, where they all come out in his last dying speech.

Since this fortunate, or rather unfortunate gentleman, has become the high priest of public opinion in England, and inspector-general of tobacco-pipes, he has attracted the attention of the people of this country, pretty much in the same way. His name would probably never have been heard in this wide western hemisphere, and certainly never would have been honoured by the contempt of a great majority of the Americans,

who have chanced to hear of him, had he not as it were forced himself into our notice, like a little irritable cur, by following us around, barking and biting our heels, until we are tempted to turn and kick the puppy, for his obtrusive impertinence and persevering ill nature. Every thing written by this doughty esquire is marked by the characteristics of his early vulgar associations; his reprehensions are vulgar abuse; his wit is of the true forecastle smack; his satire is calumny; his humour of the genuine coal-heaver stamp, and his criticism partakes of that coarse harshness, which almost always distinguishes a low man, raised by fortune rather than merit, to a height he neither sustains by his dignity, nor adorns by his modest worth.

It is from the influence of opinions coming to us under the sanction of such a person, that I would wish to see my countrymen entirely freed. While I feel gratitude for the instruction, the pleasure, the delight, which I have derived, and still derive, from the productions of British genius; while I look up to the writers of former days, as the rich fountain from whence my mind derived its earliest nourishment, I neither consider my

obligations to extend to a respect for the opinions of a pert and splenetic hireling, or to a quiet acquiescence in his abuse, although he is the countryman of Shakspeare and Goldsmith. While I reverence and admire these latter, I do not see any special reason why all the Grub-street writers of England, should receive our admiration, and challenge the privilege of reviling us, merely because they happen to be their countrymen.

The second charge I think it necessary to reply to, is that of contempt of the church, or rather the dignitaries of the church, who you say I have not treated with sufficient respect. This is a delicate subject, and perhaps might better be let alone; yet still I cannot consent to sit down quietly under the imputation, although in all probability my defence may increase the magnitude of the original fault. Notwithstanding all the libels uttered in the pulpit against poor human nature, and the alleged depravity, as well as infidelity of mankind, I cannot but feel and know, that there is a natural religious feeling pervading the whole human race. All nations, savage or civilized, that I have ever read or heard of, pay worship to a superior being; it seems a universal sentiment

indeed; and therefore do I disbelieve that testimony, come whence it may, which goes to establish their propensity to unbelief. There is another charge against honest human nature, in which I put as little faith, and that is the want of respect to the preachers of the gospel, who, wherever I have been, exercise a greater influence in society, and receive a greater degree of attention and respect, than any other class of men of equal talents and virtue. It is salutary that it should be so to a certain extent, provided it stops short of a servile obedience to every innovation they choose to introduce into the church, and to the relinquishment of those innocent gratifications, noble pursuits, and blameless amusements, which render this world tolerable to its inhabitants, contribute to purify and refine the heart, and tempt us to the exertion of the faculties bestowed upon us by the Being who is all intellect, in the pursuit of honourable distinction. Fully aware of the salutary effects resulting from a respect for religion and its respectable professors, I am not rogue or fool enough to say any thing to the disparagement of either. The observations I made in a former letter, merely related to divers little sprigs of

divinity, who, having tried all other professions in vain, have at last taken refuge in the church, where they rail with a sort of senseless impetuosity against what our good old fathers and mothers practised themselves and permitted to their children, and endeavour to gain a reputation for their unrelenting piety, which they feel is denied to their talents. I dislike to see such beardless lads, who are obliged to wear spectacles to look like men, lecturing and hectoring gray-headed men, and aged matrons, as if they were children at school. This might have passed, when priests were the only people that could read and write; but I can't help thinking it is a little indecorous now-a-days, and I am very apt to speak my mind. I contemplate a preacher of the gospel, who exhibits even a remote outline of the precepts he inculcates; who is modest, yet dignified and firm in enforcing the doctrines of his religion; who preaches forgiveness and charity to all men, and refrains from persecuting his brother; who can bear to be opposed, without insulting his antagonist; who can bear to see his fellow-creatures enjoying innocent amusements, in which it is not becoming his character to partake, without endea-

vouring to poison their pleasures by persuading them they are wicked. When I see him, in short, acting up to the high station he occupies, without arrogance in the pulpit, and servility out of it—I feel that I behold in reality an ambassador of Heaven, and contemplate such a being with a degree of reverential affection, such as I bear to my own father. While I cherish this feeling, however, I certainly do not consider myself as called upon to bow the knees of my understanding to every young gentleman in spectacles and a black coat.

Next in the list of my enormities, is a disrespect for philosophy and science, exemplified in the light manner I have spoken of the art of making worlds, and various learned as well as fashionable theories of the day. Now, so far from either of these charges being true, there is not a man in your lyceum, young or old, that feels a greater veneration for philosophy and philosophers, science and scientific men, than myself, when they are of the true sort. But I can't, for the life of me, carry this propensity so far as to admire your learned metaphysicians, who, like dancers in a cotillion, set off with a flourish, cut a few capers, and then return to the place from whence they

started. Nor, to say the truth, have I much veneration for those laborious idlers, who play at foot-ball with worlds, and make them with such perfect ease, that our veneration for the great Author of nature is astonishingly decreased, when we find the facility with which such trifles can be performed. Still less can I give my respect to a race of learned men, common in these days, who are eternally reminding us of their greatness, by publishing in the newspapers all they write, and all that is written to them; who puff each other into notice by an exchange of complimentary letters; who write long dissertations on a dry bone, or comical fish; who "nickname God's creatures," whenever they can catch them without a Latin one; who turn their own trumpeters, for want of a better, and who will travel you two hundred miles to get a piece of bone, for an excuse to advertise the public of their existence, as poor Mr. Lovell, in Evelina, paid five shillings a night to go to the play, and show his friends he was still living. Such men are, I think, fair game; amusing fellows, whose existence was a paradox, they seemed so perfectly useless, until a wag made the discovery

that they were made to be laughed at. Were it not for these truly valuable members of society, in the present dearth of merry authors, the world of literature would be as dull as our old professor's lectures, on—every thing that came into his head.

The last and most serious charge you have insinuated against me, is that of cherishing a confirmed antipathy to charitable institutions, and especially to those venerable married ladies, and thrice venerable spinsters, who go about our cities like roaring lions, doing good. Here, too, you mistake me. I only objected to the infinite number of these institutions, which are placed solely under the direction of women, whose easiness of belief, and want of experience of the various disguises under which the vicious practise on the credulity of the charitable, render them incompetent to such a delicate task. I am satisfied that this almost indiscriminate charity causes far more misery than it alleviates; panders to vice and immorality, by taking from the labouring class the strongest inducement to industry and economy, namely, the conviction that these alone would keep them from starving; by rendering it easier

to get relief by begging than by work ; and finally, by giving a sort of respectability to pauperism and beggary, which destroys the salutary contempt we used to feel towards those now right honourable and thriving professions. The moment you make beggary a tolerably respectable calling; the moment you relieve it from the tax which it pays to society, by being despised, that moment you create armies of Lazarones, and convert the idle and the indolent, whom the sense of shame had hitherto deterred, into sturdy beggars. When I was last in your city, where there is a society for the relief of every thing, I was struck with the bold and confident air which pauperism had assumed, which I suppose partly arose from the unwonted respectability of the dress it had assumed. Formerly it was necessary for a beggar to be both ragged and dirty, and to exhibit the strongest symptoms of inability to work. But during the period of my visit, I was several times accosted by stout, hearty fellows, who under pretence they could not get work, begged without a blush. The friend with whom I stayed, complained to me that there was hardly a day in which he was

not called on for charitable contributions, either to relieve somebody, or to convert the Hindoos, or Hottentots, by some of those good ladies I spoke of, who are such sturdy beggars, that there is no refusing them. One day, as I was sitting alone in the drawing-room, thinking about matters and things in general, I was roused by a most confident rap at the door. On opening it, a smart-dressed young lady tripped in. Professing a great respect for the sex, I bowed most profoundly, and invited her into the parlour. The moment she sat down, without being asked her wishes, and with the air of a demand rather than a request, she told me that her mother being in want of ten dollars, she had come with Miss ———'s compliments and a request that I would let her have the money! Now Miss ——— was secretary, or treasurer, I forget which, to several charitable institutions, and exceedingly potent in the beau monde; so I paid the ten dollars, to escape the "terrible areopagus" of the tea-table. The young lady took the money, with the air of receiving her due rather than a favour; slightly lisped "Obliged to you, Sir—*Ma* can now send me to

dancing-school this winter"—and slid out of the room with a right fashionable air. Ten dollars—laid up in heaven, thought I.

I had scarcely recommenced my cogitations, when there was another rap at the door, and a most respectable-looking matron was shown in, who handed me a subscription-book, for raising money for the support of missionaries among the Hottentots. I asked her, with all the respect I could assume, whether all the poor Indians of this country were converted? whether the soul of a Pottawottomy was not as well worth saving, as that of a Hottentot? and whether their duty to God and their country would not be quite as well fulfilled, by converting dangerous and bloody savages at our doors, into mild and peaceable Christian neighbours, as by going to the East for that purpose? "Lord, Sir," replied the lady, "nobody thinks of matters so near at home. Besides, the Missionary Magazines, and Reviews, don't say half as much about our Indians, as they do about the Hottentots and Hindoos." This was conclusive; so I paid my contribution for the conversion of the poor Hottentots, in hopes of getting into the Missionary Magazine.

This was to be a day of disbursement. The next that came was a strapping fellow, who, finding the door open, came into the parlour without knocking, from whence I judged him to be a very modest man. Now, I somehow or other always feel well inclined towards Irishmen, who will give away when they have, with the same indifference that they will beg when they have not; but by this time I began to be a little tired of the joke.

"Sir," said he, "I am lately from abroad—will you give me something to get a dinner? I have been eating soup at the expense of the society, but to say the honest truth, I am tired of it; and would like very much to dine on a turkey and oyster sauce. Will your honour give me money to buy a turkey? I can beg the oysters somewhere else."

I'll be hanged if I do, said I. Why don't you go and work? You are able enough. Go and look for employment; you'll find it, if you want it.

"Go and look for work—why, I could find that in my own country, only I didn't get paid for it. Look for work, Sir—I was told that in this country work would come and look for me; and though I have waited for it a fortnight, without

striking a stroke, in the very same place all the time, the d—l of a bit of work came near me; only a fat cook came one day out of a kitchen, and offered me two shillings to carry a pan of coal-dust to the dock—but I scorn such dirty jobs; and am for nothing under a hard dollar. Will your honour treat me to the price of a turkey?"

Not of a drum-stick, said I.

"Then may I never taste one, if I don't write to all my relations in Ireland, that is, if I could write, not to come over to this niggardly country, where work wont come to a man—where they feed us with nothing but soup, and call it charity; and where a poor fellow, like myself, who has a *curiosity* to taste a turkey, is obliged to go without it, though he takes the trouble of asking for it. By my soul, Mr. gentleman, I think the man that asks for any thing, works his heart to skin and bone for it, which is much harder than earning it by the sweat of his brow."

Huzza—Ireland for ever—thought I; here is a sentiment worth the best cock-turkey in the land, dead or alive. So I opened my heart, for that once, and gave him the price of a turkey. The honest rogue took it with an air of obligation, and

with the genuine hospitality of his country, assured me he would invite me to dine with him, as soon as he had got a place to eat it in. After this rencontre, I went out, leaving directions with the servant, to note if any suspicions persons knocked in my absence. On my return he informed me, that six ladies, with subscription-books, had called during the remainder of the morning.

I hope by this time you begin to comprehend what I mean; to wit, that the distribution of public charities ought to be in the hands of public officers, acquainted with the world, and able to detect imposture of every kind. It will then be bestowed with a wariness and circumspection, which, while it operates as far as is possible to the relief of virtuous distress, does not encourage and pamper idleness and debauchery. I can hardly believe these good ladies, to whose desire to do good I give every due praise, do really benefit mankind, by taking from the pockets of the good, to bestow on the worthless. Farewell.

LETTER XXXIV.

DEAR FRANK,

THE "Old Ancients," as our friend W——, the Bank Director, used to call them, pictured the god of riches as lolling in the lap of Peace, and glittering in ornaments of gold. The modern Plutus is quite a different sort of personage, who, if he had his dues, and came forth in his appropriate livery, would look very much like a scarecrow in a corn-field, which is generally a man of straw clothed in rags. This beggarly Plutus, instead of being nursed by Peace, like his ancient namesake, is the offspring of War. By the exercise of a rare kind of magic he converts the debts of an institution into a source of wealth, and is consequently rich in proportion to the number of his creditors, rather than of his debtors. This new system of getting rich under the patronage

of the paper Plutus is a great improvement on the ancient one, since it is much easier for a man to get in debt to others than to get others in debt to him.

To illustrate this, I will simply give you the prominent features of the present fashionable banking Plutus, which has set so many splendid paupers on horseback, and caused all those, with few exceptions, who are not connected with the system, to walk on foot. A modern Bank spins itself out of its own bowels as a spider does the web with which he catches the silly flies that buzz about. I will give you the history of one of these—which is nearly the history of all, and which I learned from an ex-director.

In a certain city, over which there did *not* reign a mighty monarch, but which was governed by an illustrious Mayor and twenty-four fat Aldermen, which is a great city on paper, and, like the famous *Terra Incognita*, makes a terrible figure on the map, but is just as difficult to be found elsewhere as the said Terra Incognita. In this great city certain tavernkeepers, stage-owners, and drivers of hackney-coaches, being in want of money, did incontinently gather themselves together, and

make a Bank. They first elected themselves Directors, and after advertising that the capital stock of the Bank, to wit, the paper not yet made, was all that they meant to appropriate to the payment of their debts, they fell to work, and made as many bank-notes as the President could possibly sign. With these notes they paid up their instalments, by borrowing of the bank to pay the bank. The plan succeeded so famously, that Messrs. Tom, Dick, Harry, Tag, Rag, Bobtail, and the rest of them, got up banks in the same way, until at last money became so plenty that it was actually the cheapest thing at market—which was a great blessing. Thus it continued, until this great city contained more than a dozen banks, which in a little time issued more paper than all the property in the place above and under ground could redeem. Every body could get as much money as they wanted; consequently every body ran in debt, and nobody would work, because they could live without so degrading themselves. The whole community became independent—except that every body was dependent on banks, and no man could call his house his own. People talk of the golden age—but it was nothing to the

age of paper. Houses grew up like mushrooms, and tumbled down as soon. Property attained to such a high price that nobody could afford to buy it, but those who had no money; and every man, disdaining the pursuits of regular industry, became a dashing speculator, and went neck or nothing—which was another very fine thing. The staple commodities of this town attained to such an enormous and extravagant value, owing to the great plenty of paper money, that they cost more at home than they would sell for abroad; and thus that pernicious race of men, the merchants, was ruined—which was another exceeding fine thing. But the beauty of the whole system was, that it enabled a man to live in splendour all his life, leaving it to his children to pay his debts, instead of ruining their morals by leaving them a great fortune, as had hitherto been fashionable. Having produced this consummation so devoutly to be wished, nothing was wanting but to render it as permanent as the nature of things would permit. So they petitioned the legislature which presided over the destinies of this great city, stating that they had established these banks in the teeth of the laws, to the which they had been induced by

their great respect for the legislature which enacted the laws—and that therefore justice demanded that this violation of the law, and this respect for the lawgivers, should be duly acknowledged, by legalizing these banks as a reward for their breach of the laws! This reasoning was irresistible, and charters were given them in a lump, as an inducement to others to break the laws, and respect the legislatures.

The example of this great paper city has been followed in the neighbourhood, in all directions, so that there is scarcely a town, that is to say, a cluster of a dozen houses, in this part of the world, that has not one or more banks. Some are smitten with the prospect of sharing in the spoils of honest industry, which pays all the tax of the depreciation of money; and honest men are frequently forced to become accomplices rather than victims. The country is puffed into an appearance of bloated prosperity, which deceives the unwary, but is in reality weakened most essentially by this precarious expansion, and impoverished in fact by the loss of a portion of its export trade, owing to the unnaturally high price of every staple article at home—as well as by the

comparative decrease of the value of incomes arising from the solid source of real capital. Men of the largest landed estates cannot cope with the expenses of a dependent on a bank, and must either shrink from a comparison with these upstart, unreal pageants, who have Bank Directors for their friends, or join the current, mortgage their estates, live splendidly—die insolvent, and leave their children beggars.

Interest makes men plausible, if not ingenious in argument, and I have heard many specious arguments in favour of this paper system, which in my mind is more pernicious to the morals, manners, and real permanent prosperity of this country, than any one cause, or all other causes put together, not excepting whiskey.

It strikes at the root of honest industry, and industry is the foundation of the good morals of nine-tenths of mankind, who, for want of other sources of amusement in idleness, would become vicious merely to pass the time. The denunciation of a life of labour on fallen man was the greatest blessing that ever accompanied so great an evil as was that fall. But the facility of getting paper money from banks has converted a great

portion of the tradesmen and labouring classes into *speculators*. They have got a habit and facility of running in debt, which renders them careless of incurring debts. This in a little time does away that salutary unwillingness to run in debt, which is the safegurd of honesty, and at last causes an unprincipled carelessness, as to the fulfilment of pecuniary engagements and the payment of debts, except by new discounts, which increase them.

The torrent of *speculation* is rolling through this land with the width of an ocean, and the rapidity of a torrent. You can't listen to the conversation of any two men at the corners of the streets, without hearing it repeated over and over again, and those who talk of nothing else, can prate of mighty speculations. Every soul seems mad, and plunges into the torrent, to sink or swim as chance may direct; for those who have nothing to lose don't much care who it is that pays the penalty of their failure. No matter if some dozen families are ruined. The hope of getting rich at one dash, however forlorn, stimulates the sturdy beggar of a speculator, who first is supported by banks, and afterward by the public

credulity. The slow, and sure, and blameless gains of honest industry, are beneath his attention. The mechanic, who has gathered a little independence, or what would be an independence, were it not for the *rags* in circulation, by plodding for years, urged on by penurious example, or penurious sophistry, must, forsooth, build houses upon speculation, without knowing whether there is any body to live in them. The banks, which are now so numerous that the ordinary demands of trade do not employ their capitals, one half will gladly lend him money, and take a mortgage on his houses. If he pays, very well; if not, so much the better, the bank seizes his property, and thus exchanges paper for house and land; which is turning a penny, you know, pretty handsomely.* So fares it with almost every other class of the community; and even the honest farmer,—he whom nothing but the war of elements can touch, is seduced by the pernicious

* I have been assured, by a most respectable gentleman of the bar, that *three-fourths* of the judgments obtained in the supreme court of the state of New-York, within the last three years, were in favour of banks, against real property. What a thriving exchange—lands and houses for rags! EDITOR.

facility of getting paper money, from one of these little manufactures of rags in his neighbourhood, into a thousand schemes of improvement and speculation. The failure of one begets the want of more money, which is freely supplied, till it amounts to nearly the value of his land. But the time for paying debts, like the period of death, will come at last. The farm is advertised for sale in time of great scarcity, when it will bring the least money; is sold for just enough to pay the bank mortgage,—the poor speculating farmer is thrust from the spot of his inheritance, and left to begin the world anew,—and for many a long year neither he nor his family are in want of *rags*. Thus the real wealth and property of the country changes hands, and the manufacturers of *rags* become the proprietors of great landed estates. The farmer is seduced into an acquiescence in this great system of *swindling*, by the high price he receives for his produce; and the mechanic by his wages being raised. But instead of being the richer, they are, in reality, the poorer for it; since, with the high price they now receive, they cannot procure the same necessaries or luxuries they did when their produce and their labour

was cheaper. They, with the rest, pay tribute to the gentlemen who speculate on *bank capitals*, as they are ludicrously called, and the other gentlemen who create these capitals by the aid of a paper-mill, and thus make as much money as they want, and divide nine or ten per cent. on their own debts!

To show the effect of country banks, I will relate a little example which came under my own observation a day or two ago, and gave rise to these speculations, I believe. We stopt in the evening to sleep at the house of a Dutchman, who kept a sort of traveller's rest, rather, I believe, lest he should be obliged to entertain travellers for nothing, than from any great desire to add to the profits of his farm. It was a scene, and an evening, that made me melancholy with the fear of some day dying, and leaving a world so lovely. The house was on a rising ground, behind which, and close at hand, rose a majestic mountain, not savage with rocks and rugged precipices, but exhibiting a green foliage unbroken to the very top, whose graceful, waving outline, brought to the mind images of peace. In front was spread the richest little vale I ever saw;

where meadows, and corn-fields, the latter rising half a dozen feet above the fences, and the former, speckled with sheep and cattle, succeeded each other in rich luxuriance. At one extremity ran a branch of the river Shenandoah, half hid among the high elms and sycamores; and a little further on rose a peaked hill, behind which the sun was setting. Every thing seen was peace, —and every thing heard was silence,—for it so accorded with the silence, as to render it more striking in the intervals. We sometimes heard the cow-bell—sometimes the negro's sonorous and resounding laugh, which waked the mountain echo,—sometimes his inimitable whistle, emulating the fife,—and occasionally his song, which, heard in the distance, was singularly melodious. As long as I live, I shall never forget that scene, unless, perchance, I become a money-lender, or a money-maker, of which, I believe, there is little danger.

It was, in truth, a place for a man to make his home; and the honest Dutchman, for such he approved himself, not only by his dialect, but by his invincible predilection for rich bottoms, seemed to think as much; for he appeared to be

actually contented, a rare thing in this world. In the calm leisure of the dusk of evening, he and his dame, and a jolly dame was she,—good humoured as a lark, and round as a dumpling,—came and sat with us in the porch; he, with his pipe; she, with her snuff-box, bearing on its lid the likeness of Commodore Porter. This custom is highly eschewed by all orthodox English travellers; but for my part, if a man is not wilfully obtrusive, and transgresses no law of etiquette that he knows of, I like his company, and can generally get something amusing or instructive from him.

Mine host seemed such a rare comfortable dog, that I determined to know, if possible, how he became so; and in order to entitle myself to his history, told him mine beforehand, for country people are always a little curious. The substance of the burgomaster's, or justice's (for so he announced himself) story was as follows:

"I married," said he, "at the age of twenty-six, and my wife, though perhaps you won't believe it, was reckoned a beauty in her day. My fortune was three hundred and twenty-eight pounds, and a negro man; and my wife brought

me a great chest filled with, I dare say, six hundred petticoats and short gowns, which have lasted till this day; so her clothing cost me nothing. This was what we had to begin the world with. After looking about a little, I bought this farm, which being much worn, and out of order, I got cheap. The money I had was enough for the first payment, and the rest of the purchase-money was to be paid in three equal annual instalments.

"The farm, as I said, was then in poor order, the fields a good deal worn out, the fences bad, and the house very old. But there was no time to groan; for the year was coming about, and the money must be paid. So Tom, and I, and often my wife, turned out early and late, and worked like horses; and after selling my harvest, I carried my first payment home in hard dollars.

"Well," continued the Dutchman, "the next year I went on still better, paid the money still easier, and at the end of the third year my farm was my own. The times, somehow or other, mended with me every day; and what is very odd, though my wife always brought me at the time of each payment a chopping boy, yet when I returned from making the last, she brought me

two fine girls, I suppose because she knew we could now afford it. We now thought to make ourselves comfortable by building a better home, for we had but a poor one before: so in the spring I set to work as soon as the frost was out of the ground. I burnt my own bricks and lime, from my own limestone and clay, and furnished timber and boards from my own farm. In the mean time, the war came on; and as it is an ill wind that blows nobody good, the number of wagons passing this way increased every day, because the produce could not go round by sea. I sold all the produce of my land at my own door, except my wheat. If that was high, I could afford to send the flour to market; and if not, I cut it into *shorts*, to feed the wagoners' horses. By the time my house was finished, it was paid for; and now I don't know what I shall build next, for my part. I am forty-three years old. I have twelve hundred acres of as fine bottom as any in Virginia,—a good grist and saw-mill, a tolerable good wife, if I could only make a fine lady of her; but she sticks to the old chest of clothes like a moth,—a decent house over my head; and I owe no man a shilling except Tom,

who by now and then raising a little grain, shooting a deer, and waiting on travellers, has in my hands enough to buy his freedom. But he is free already, for that matter, and knows he can go where he pleases."

"Pray," said I, "did you ever get a discount?" "A discount,—what's that?" said the Dutchman. "Did you ever borrow money of a bank, and mortgage your land for it?" "No, no," said he, "I wasn't such a fool as that. My poor neighbour, whose house you see over the river yonder, with the windows broke, and no smoke to the chimney, played a trick of that kind; but his farm is soon to be sold at vendue, and I think of buying it. His family were in great distress, though we helped them on a little to get to the back country, where, I hear, they are doing pretty well again."

I will not trouble you with the moral of this story, but conclude this long letter by bidding you beware of discounts. Good night.

LETTER XXXV.

DEAR FRANK,

THE tongue touches where the tooth aches, as the saying goes; the English of which is, that people are apt to talk of what annoys them most at the moment. Thus, the great evil under which I have laboured of late is paper-money, which, throughout the whole of our country, has assumed so many different shapes, and sustained such an infinite variety of value in different places, that a man is obliged to go to a broker to get shaved, as the phrase is, as often as to a barber. This is the true signification of money being the root of all evil. The frequent recurrence of these vexatious visits, during my travels, has brought my mind to think seriously on this subject, and the result of my observations and reflections is, that the present *paper*-system is the most pernicious

to the real prosperity, morals, and independence of this country, of any ever devised by the cupidity of man. It has already worked the most dangerous inroads on the virtuous independence, which was not long since the lot of all; and if suffered to continue, will place the whole community in a state of abject dependence on banks.

Power, which used to follow land, has now gone over to paper-money. The landholder does not feel this as yet, so extensively as he will by and by, when he will find his stinted independence fade away, in comparison with the short-lived splendours of the bank-dependent, and he obliged to enlist in the honourable band of bank-paupers. The period of his ruin will be dated from his first discount; for wherever a false capital is created, it will in time swallow up the real one, as a vacuum attracts and absorbs the surrounding air.

The other evening I went to sleep, with these and such like thoughts in my head; and as people are apt to dream of what they think of when awake, I was possessed with the following curious vision.

Methought I was poring over a bank-note, which I think was issued from a place called "*Owl-*

Creek," and happening to say to myself, "Where the deuce did this come from?" I was answered in a small squeaking voice as follows—at first I could not tell where it came from, but on closer examination, I discovered a motion in the bill of the figure of an owl, with which the note was decorated.

"I am the offspring of a bandana handkerchief, that was once worn about the neck of a learned East-Indian, acquainted with all the arts of Eastern magic, and a piece of Irish linen, whilom part of the night-cap of an old Irish witch. This accounts for my being gifted with speech. I was born in a paper-mill, and the first thing I recollect, was being nearly squeezed to death under a piece of copper, which bruised me black and blue all over. Then I was taken to the bank, and underwent a sort of transubstantiation, under the magic hands of the President and Cashier; for from a rag, I became converted into solid gold, or at least something nearly as valuable.

"I had not been here long, before I was counted out to a young man who carried me to his master, a merchant, who lived in a fine house drove a splendid equipage, and fared sumptuously

every day. I felicitated myself mightily that I had got into such comfortable quarters; but *soon* discovered all was not right with my new master. As he carried me in his pocket, I had an opportunity of watching him closely, and hearing all that he said, or others said to him. I learned, that he had set out in business with a reasonable capital, which under prudent management would have led him to a comfortable independency; but was seduced by the example of those around him, and by the facility of getting discounts, into borrowing money of the banks, and trading on credit to a great amount. But he learned too late that the man who is always borrowing and paying interest for his money, is working for his creditor, and not for himself. At the time I saw him he was a wretched dependent on the caprice of banks, to whom, in the course of business, he had paid in discounts what would have been to him an immense fortune. He could not sleep at night; for the sun never rose that did not see him in debt for more than he could pay. Every day he was obliged to run round to all his acquaintance to borrow money to pay his notes; and not a day passed over his head, that he could tell whether he

would not be openly a bankrupt before night; for all depended on the caprice of Bank Directors. To add to his distresses, his wife and children, fancying him a man of immense riches, indulged in every species of extravagance, and he had not the courage to tell them a few months would probably make them beggars. In fact, I had not been with him long, before the banks, either from necessity or caprice, drew in their discounts; my master failed—the banks got all his property—the rest of his creditors got nothing; and his wife and children found themselves in beggary, with a thousand artificial wants to pamper. His furniture was seized and sold, and the whole family crept into a small house in the suburbs. This I learned afterward, for I did not accompany them, having been passed away to a shopkeeper, by my master's lady, the day before he failed, in part payment for a cashmere shawl for which she gave a hundred and fifty dollars.

"My new master was a brisk, stirring little man, who made more bows than a dancingmaster, but got well paid for them, by cheating faster than he bowed. He always sold his goods at first cost, pledged his honour to every thing, true or false,

and possessed that inveterate habit of petty roguery, so common to people who loved no other object in life but making money. Judging from his style of living and his habits, I at first thought he must be very snug and comfortable in his circumstances, till all at once I found myself in a drawer with two or three of those pleasant invitations beginning with, 'Your note for so and so, becomes due, &c.' Whenever my master rereived any of these mementos, he was seized with an alarming fit of the fidgets, and there was a terrible 'whipping of the cat,' as it is called, on the days the notes become due. This whipping the cat, is nothing more than a parcel of traders puffing at one another's heels, of a morning, to borrow money. One day one man is hunted for his money, and the next, when his own note becomes due, he hunts his neighbour, so that their funds are a common borrowing stock; and he who hunts as Actæon one day, is a hunted Actæon the next. In short, having one day an accidental peep at my master's books, I discovered that he had been actually insolvent for more than five years. About a week after I had been with him, he sent me to a certain bank, to help take up a

note of hand. In passing through the Directors' room, I heard it decided not to discount any more for my late master and his friends, as they were no longer safe, and did not owe any thing to the bank. So a few days after I heard it whispered, that they had thrown out all their notes. My old master broke first; he fell against his neighbour, and like a row of bricks, they all tumbled, one after the other, and took the benefit 'of the act.'

"Before I had been here long, I was taken out of the bank by one of the Directors, each of whom had a regular accommodation of fifty thousand dollars to *shave* notes of hand with. He carried me in his pocket some days, by which means I was present at some of their meetings on discount days, where I saw them refuse to discount notes, which my master *shaved* afterward on his own account! I forgot to mention, that I was several nights deposited in the vaults of the bank, where, although this was one of the banks that paid specie, I give you my word there was not specie enough to pay a check of five thousand dollars. I saw but three small boxes of it, which was all that was there; for being an owl, I could distinctly see though it was dark. The way they ma-

naged to pay specie was this: all the traders were given to understand, that if they asked for the least quantity of specie, they would forfeit all claim to future favours from the banks; and such was the miserable state of dependence of the greater part of the community, that not one out of a thousand dared incur the penalty. This was called resuming the payment of specie! I could tell you a great many tricks of these gentry, but it is not my interest to do it, since by injuring them I lose my own consequence in society, and am reduced to rags again.

"In process of time, my master, the Bank Director, who was in the same state of abject dependence on banks, with my former ones, passed me away to a shoemaker, in payment of a bill of two years standing. I was in hopes I had now got into the hands of an independent man, until I saw two or three bank notices, stuck up with an awl over his desk, to remind the honest man he owed more than he could pay, and thus encourage and quicken his industry, I suppose. I could not help wondering what could make this man such a fool, as to suppose he could grow rich by paying interest to other people, seeing that the

rate of interest is always considered the value of money, and what money will make, when applied to any certain and regular mode of business. I found it was the force of example, and that he did this because all his neighbours did the same. The example of every body is better than all the argument in the world; and the thing appeared to be perfectly natural. My worthy master, for such he was in fact, worked hard for the banks, and made his very lap-stone sweat to pay his discounts; but tempted at last, by the facility of raising money, he made a bad speculation in hides, and went the way of all flesh now-a-days. Before he became openly bankrupt, he made over all his actual property to secure his endorser, that being a debt of honour; the endorser paid it over to the bank —the bank got paid—and the rest of the creditors whistled for their money. My master went into the country to take the air, and keep out of the way of his creditors; and in the course of his travels passed me away to a tavernkeeper, in a small town, where there were two banks; the town was a place of considerable consequence, being on the banks of a river which was almost

navigable for batteaux, and carried on a great trade in lime, coal, shingles, and brick-making.

"My master, the landlord, was a Director of one of these banks, and carried me to a meeting of the Directors, where, though an owl, I laughed till my feathers almost fell out, to see what a set of raggamuffins had got together. There were four tavernkeepers, three small shopkeepers, a brick-maker, a splitter of shingles, a speculator, and two non-descripts, whose calling I could not make out. Not one of these had a decent coat to his back, except the President, who was a man of good landed estate, which he was silly enough to jeopardize in this way. For though the bank promised to pay every body out of "*the joint funds*," I could never find out what or where these were; and it is pretty certain, that when the time of redeeming these debts shall come, the creditors will apply to the person among these Directors who has most property, and levy the debt on him. As to the ridiculous idea that only the "joint funds" of these unchartered institutions are liable for their debts, it is just as preposterous, as to suppose that a man can get rid of his debts by

advertising, before he contracts them, that he could only pay to a certain amount.

"These two banks made the village flourish to the eye; but this prosperity was only the bloom on the cheek of consumption. Great houses rose up in various parts, but they were all mortgaged to the banks, who lent the money, thus getting real property for rags of their own making. No man lived in his own house,—all belonged to the banks, who could at any time turn the village out of doors. Every thing was done on credit, for the village having few natural advantages, depended for its summer of apparent prosperity on the discounts of the banks. The shopkeeper traded, the tavernkeeper carried on his business, the brickmaker made bricks, and the shingle-splitter, split his shingles,—with bank notes which he borrowed. The one endorsed the notes of the other; and if one failed, they all ran away together; for this is one of the great advantages of having nothing of one's own—a man can run away at a moment's warning.

"It was singular to see what strange notions these people had acquired with regard to the claims they had on the banks for money, when-

ever they wanted it. It often happened, that either from necessity, caprice, or a desire to foreclose certain mortgages, the banks drew in their discounts, and then there was such an outcry against the cruelty and injustice of the banks, as never was heard, because Mr. Such-a-one was obliged to stop building a fine house for the embellishment of the town. Another could not go on with his tavern,—a third was obliged to stop digging his cellar,—a fourth was obliged to stop burning bricks,—and, in short, the whole world of the village stood stock still, except several prosperous gentlemen, who found it convenient to run away on the occasion. Nobody ever thought of working in this happy village, because it was so much easier to borrow of the banks, than to earn money by honest industry. In some way or other, almost every man in the village was connected with a bank Director, who helped him with a discount; and those who were not so fortunate, descended to all the arts of dirty subserviency, and became the tools of the mighty man, in order to get a discount. Every one, of course, became a speculator in something, —for the profits of a regular trade not being sufficient to pay the creditor his interest, and

support the debtor at the same time, he must resort to some extraordinary means to make money, and these means are generally wild speculations that end in ruin. But for all this, every body insisted on it that the village was flourishing beyond all example, and that banks were great blessings.

"My master, the tavernkeeper, finding that owing to some new turn of the *balance of trade*—which I don't profess to understand, but which seems to account for every thing in this world—finding, I say, that I was beginning to depreciate on his hands, passed me away to a worthy farmer of the neighbourhood. Here I thought, to be sure, I should find independence; but alas! my poor master too was on the high road to the transfer of his land in exchange for paper-money. The brick-making Bank Director had, it seems, the summer before, rode over to see him, and persuaded him to enter into partnership with him in the brick-making business. "I have no ready money to spare," said the farmer. The brick-maker soon let him into the secret of getting it, and assured him he could do it without being a dollar out of pocket. Allured by these golden

prospects, the farmer endorsed a note drawn by the brickmaker: they got the paper-money, and set to work. But somehow or other, the farmer had received nothing yet, but was every now and then obliged to endorse another note, for, according to the old saying, "in for a penny, in for a pound." The catastrophe of all this is very obvious. A little while after I came into the poor farmer's possession, he got to the length of his tether. The bank would discount no more,—the notes lay over,—the brickmaker ran away,—the farm was sold for just enough to pay the bank,—was bought in, by a director, for the bank,—and the honest farmer was a beggar. In fact, every thing I saw here convinced me, that the extent to which the wretched system of banking is now carried, is an ingenious contrivance to ruin people of real property,—to impoverish honest independence, by rendering it the victim of these splendid paupers, who invent an imaginary currency, create an empty ghost of money, which, by playing on the avarice or blind folly of men of real property, swallows them up, and transfers, by a sort of legerdemain, the wealth of the independent man, to the pockets of the pauper. It

behooves the landed interest to be on the watch against these tempters, who persuade men to exchange their property for rags, or, ere long, they will be in the situation of the landholders of England, who are swallowed up by the paper system.

"The holders of land generally, are persuaded that they are great gainers by the enormous plenty of paper-money, which raises the nominal price of their produce; and the merchants are fully assured that these banks are essential to their existence. But they are assuredly mistaken, since every thing the farmer buys is raised in more than an equal proportion with every thing he sells. I have happened to hear it argued that this is nothing to the purpose, because the farmer sells more than he buys. True, but the trader is no fool, and will put an advance on the little the farmer buys of him, that will indemnify him for the high price he is obliged to give for the produce of the farmer, which *he* consumes. So long therefore as the farmer buys any thing, he in effect gains nothing by the high price of his produce, since he only receives it in one hand to pay it out with the other.

"The merchants, it is true, have, a vast many of them, been living of late years by bank accommodations. But there is a reaction in every thing, and there is great danger of their soon dying by them. Nothing indeed is more certain than that the prodigious and disproportionate nominal capital now afloat in this country, will, ere long, destroy our export trade in a great measure, by enhancing the price of articles of export. Every thing is now so high here that it cannot be sent to other countries without loss, as it is dearer here than any where else. Thus we shall see, if I am not mistaken, that the flour about to be shipped to England, even during the present great apprehended scarcity, will not sell for enough to cover the cost and expenses, and that many of the adventurers will be ruined. We see too that articles which we used to export are now imported from other countries; and this importation will increase in proportion as the phenomenon of our prices becomes known abroad. While potatoes are a dollar a bushel—flour fourteen or fifteen dollars a barrel—pork two or three and twenty—and butter half a dollar a pound, we shall soon have potatoes, butter, and beef from

Ireland, and flour from the Black Sea. It is this factitious, high nominal price of every article that is one great cause of our ships rotting at the wharves in such numbers, as their owners cannot give the present price of articles of export, and ship them to any foreign port without a certainty of loss. People lay the whole of this to the loss of the carrying trade, &c. but much of it is owing to the cause I have stated.

"But to resume my narrative. In the division of the poor farmer's spoils, I fell into the hands of a president of one of the most curious banking institutions I ever heard of, except one which I shall mention anon. It was solely and exclusively under the control of this person, who formed by a certain fiction of law an incorporated company within himself. He was a man whose notes of hand would not have been taken for a bunch of radishes, and his character for roguery and tricking was so notorious, that no man made a bargain with him but with fear and trembling. People of liberal notions called him a cunning fellow; but those who had stricter ideas of morality and honesty called him an arrant knave. His credit, in fact, was not worth a rush, yet his bank-

notes passed current all over the place and the adjacent country, although nobody knew that the man was worth a shilling, or that his bank was in possession of any funds to redeem them. Such was the blind folly and stupidity of the public, and so loose had become their notions on the subject of a circulating medium, that this man was enabled to pass away several hundred thousand of these worthless notes, on which he obtained an interest of seven per cent., without either possessing or employing any real capital whatever! The various arts by which he kept this business going, were altogether singular and original in their way. By certain arrangements with certain other banks, he made it their interest to take his notes in exchange for theirs, so that when any of the holders of his notes came to demand payment, he could always give them other notes in exchange, with which the poor simpletons went away perfectly contented, and ever afterward placed full confidence in his paper. To gain credit for his bank-notes at a distance, he would send an agent to some city to the south, who advertised to buy them up for specie, that is to say, before any of them were in

circulation at this particular place. Having thus prepared the way, he passed off his notes without difficulty in the purchase of produce. In a little time, however, the market would be overstocked with his paper; the agent who paid specie for his notes when there were none to redeem, had gone off with his purchases, and then they fell below par. Another agent was then employed in buying them up at a discount of ten or twelve per cent., which, of course, was a clear gain to this worthy gentleman. When he first set up in this profitable business, he issued notes payable in cash—six months after date—but the word "CASH" was put in large flaring capitals, while the "six months after date" were in letters so small as to be almost illegible. By these and similar arts of swindling, he managed to gain from ten to fifteen thousand dollars a year out of nothing. In any other age, but this exceedingly liberal one, such a system of swindling would have ensured to a man the contempt of his fellow-creatures, and created a solitude around him. But my master, the incorporated President, continued to keep his station; men who maintained reputable characters in society took him by the hand, when they

met, and he was often seen in the streets, talking to people who were neither highwaymen nor swindlers! Such was the liberality of the people where this honest gentleman grew and flourished!

"'Birds of a feather flock together'—and my master, the President and Corporation in one person, happened to have some dealings, the exact nature of which I could never fathom, with a person from the city of B———, into whose hands I passed. He was going on a tour to the south, and thought he could pass me away to advantage. He was the President of a Manufacturing and Banking Company at B———, the nature and character of which I will fully explain. The company had been incorporated by an act of the legislature, as a manufacturing institution. By way of creating funds to begin business with, and of which they were in exceeding great want, the first thing they did was to employ Messrs. Murray, Draper & Co. without whose assistance no banking company can get along, to prepare them a pretty copper-plate, that would engrave a pretty picture. With this they struck a large number of notes, with "CHARTERED BY THE STATE," in great capitals at the top, to gull the

people. After issuing about fifteen thousand dollars of these, and purchasing machinery—(the people will take any trash for money now-a-days)—it was agreed at a meeting of the Directors, that the President, being the most honest looking man of the set, should be sent on an expedition to the south, to buy cotton for the manufactory. Accordingly he set forth, with his saddlebags filled with quires of blank notes, which he was to sign as occasion required. In passing through a certain great city, with fourteen banks to its back, he was taken up as a swindler, and tried for passing a fifty dollar note of this precious Manufacturing Company. In the course of the trial the following facts came out, on the confession of certain Directors of this company, whom the worthy President summoned as witnesses in his behalf.

"The Judge had great difficulty in coming at them, for it seems each of these worthy gentlemen had been sworn to secrecy. 'Honour among thieves,' you know, is a sacred maxim; however, the Judge at last unlocked the 'secrets of their prison-house,' by threatening to commit them for contempt of court, if they did not answer. Their scruples of conscience being thus overcome, it

came out that the company never had any funds whatever, to answer their issues of bank-notes. The capital was composed as follows: First, machinery, &c. purchased with these notes. Secondly, notes of hand of the workmen employed by them, who were permitted to subscribe for a certain amount of the stock of the company, and work it out afterward. Thirdly, eight dollars and sixty-two and a half cents placed in one of the banks—to swear by! This certainly was the perfection of the banking system of the present day; and I think might have furnished my friend and old master, the incorporated President, with some useful hints for the improvement of his paper-manufactory. The old system of banking was to pay the capital first, and then to issue notes; the present is to issue notes, and pay up subscriptions with *them*, which is certainly a great improvement, since, by this means, beggars can get on horse-back, and ride to the d—l, if they please. I don't know but what this will do well enough, till payday comes, and a hundred and fifty or two hundred millions of paper dollars are to be redeemed with silver. When that doleful period comes, and come it will, if the public confidence

in paper-money is thus every day weakened, by the creation of new banks, authorized and unauthorized—some of these banking institutions will dissolve, and fade away, and nobody will know where to go and get the money for their notes.* Others will be sued for every five-dollar bill; the lawyers will have plenty of business, and no fees, except in paper-money; and instead of getting the money for a bill by asking for it in the good old way, we shall be obliged to go to law with a shadow, and purchase the assistance of those redoubtable fellows, John Doe and Richard Roe, who always make people pay dearly for their alliance.

"The issue of the trial was such as might be expected, in a district where fourteen banks and three corporations were hard at work making paper-money. It was dangerous to establish the precedent, that people who issued bank-notes without funds to redeem them, were swindlers;

* This has lately happened in the instance of a bank in the western part of this State, which lately failed for upwards of a hundred and fifty thousand dollars, without possessing funds to pay a tenth part of the amount. What a hopeful system of swindling by wholesale! No wonder people leave their honest callings to become manufacturers of bank-notes.

and so the worthy President was acquitted. His well-stored saddlebags were restored, and he set forth, reassured and gay, to take in the flats of the south with his bank-notes, '*chartered by the State.*' If the jury was warranted in the acquittal of this man, it would seem to imply, that there is no law either to prevent or punish such infamous impositions on the public credulity. It seems equally to follow, that it is high time for the legislatures to do their duty; and by passing a statute for that purpose, redeem themselves from a suspicion by no means uncommon, that some of them at least have more than once sold their consciences, and sacrificed the public interests, to become accomplices in the roguery and gains of these swindlers of the nation. Though legislators, as we all know, are much above common men—though they are, as we all know, exempt from the usual frailties of our—I mean human nature; and elevated far above the temptations of self-interest; still there is too much reason to suspect, that the *bonus* usually given on these occasions for public purposes, was not the only bribe offered and received on these occasions. However this may be, certain it is, that either by their folly, or

knavery, their blindness or participation, a paper aristocracy has sprung up among the people, oppressive in the highest degree, and equally dangerous to their freedom as their morals. Not only in the cities, but in the country south of Connecticut River, are people losing their habits of industry, to become dependents on banks, and speculators in something or other; but what is perhaps still worse, men are daily more and more acquiring a habit of extravagance, supported by borrowing of the banks, and not by the regular profits of their estates, or their business. That this will end in a system of bankruptcy, more extensive than any ever yet known, is sufficiently apparent. It will not be long ere the paper system will fall in Great Britain, never to rise again; and we who gained our confidence in it by witnessing her rise, will lose it in beholding her fall. The time is not far distant when the landholder, and the possessor of real estate, will resume their proper station and influence in society, and no longer shrink into comparative insignificance before the momentary magnificence of some upstart, unreal pageant."

How long the sage and learned owl would have gone on with his reflections I know not; for in rummaging my pocket for a pencil to note down some of his remarks, which I thought rather apt, I happened to bring out a half-eagle, which I had preserved as a last refuge against poverty. Sir Owl was nearly frightened out of his wits at this unexpected apparition, and began to whoop and flap his wings at such a rate, that I awoke with the terrible screeching he made, as he flew up the chimney. Adieu.

LETTER XXXVII.

DEAR FRANK,

INQUIRING at the post-office here, I got your letter, which I honestly confess, made me laugh like a whole swarm of flies. Remembering what a hero you have always been at tea-parties, it diverted me out of measure to hear your complaints at being cut out by the little captain in the red coat, if coat it may be called, being, according to your description, destitute of skirts. This is the first time, it seems, the truth has been brought home to you, that the people of this country, and especially the genteeler sort, and most especially the fashionable belles, are still in a colonial state, and cherish pretty much the same notions as did their beautiful grandmothers, who figured at the little courts of the little governors of the little North American colonies.

The good city ladies who were belles some forty years ago, instill into the minds of their aspiring granddaughters the most romantic ideas respecting the beaux, who figured in regimentals, about his excellency the governor's drawing-room; and who, they insist upon it, were a different race of beings from those of the present day. It is to be observed, that ladies who have once been belles, ascribe the changes which take place in their own powers of attraction, to other people; and attribute the absence of those attentions paid them when they were young and beautiful, to a change in the nature of man, instead of the loss of their youthful attractions.

Hence it is that you hear them dwelling with such complacency upon the parties given at the government-house, before the war,—of the politeness of his excellency, Sir what-d'ye-call-um, —the polished manners of the *Honourable* Major *this*, and the chivalrous gallantry of Lord *that*.—Think of that, Frank,—a *lord!* I once met one of these ladies, who preserved, as relicks, a pair of gloves, which she wore in dancing a minuet with Lord Dunmore, the revolutionary Cockburn. When, in addition to this influence, it is consider-

ed, that the perceptions of the young misses are inflated with the habitual perusal of novels, the heroes of which are all foreigners, and, of course, gifted with superhuman excellence, it is no such mighty matter of wonder, that you, and your honest city beaux, should fare so ill, when unexpectedly brought into competition with a little red coat without any skirts; or that the young ladies should all run to the windows, when it passes, like the little white-headed urchins of the woods, when they hear the rattling of a carriage.

Still less is it to be wondered at, that so many of them have such an invincible propensity to become *strollers* about the European world; or that, in their insatiate desires to figure abroad, they often become victims to their own vanity, and many swindlers or adventurers, under the temptation of being carried to Europe. Many of these have fallen under my observation, who thus chose to themselves a lot of misery, and were either deserted when their fortunes were spent in profligate revelry, or condemned to drag out their existence in the society of worthlessness and vice.

You did not know Maria D——, I think; but I did: and fairer prospects never dawned on the sunny eye of youth, beauty, and intelligence, than seemed to be hers. But, unfortunately, her mamma had once been in England; and, as ill luck would have it for poor Maria, had danced in the same room, nay, I believe, in the same set with the Prince of Wales. Of course she could never talk or think of any thing else all her life afterward. It was shrewdly suspected that she put her husband to a lingering death with this story; and it is pretty certain that it caused all the misfortunes of my little associate, on whom nature had showered all the blossoms of spring, and who promised a rich product of delightful fruits in summer and autumn. But this unlucky dance spoiled all. The mother told the story morning, noon, and night, and danced that fatal dance over and over again, to the same tune, until the young lady could think, and talk, and dream, of nothing but figuring at court, and dancing with princes and lords, whom she fancied something or other, she knew not what, but far above any thing on this side the water.

The mother never heard of a foreigner being in town that she did not get the fidgets, until he was brought and introduced to the daughter, who soon, in her anxiety to go abroad, actually paid such broad attentions to these exotics, that instead of being alluring to the worthy among them, she became offensive. Unfortunately, though she had not fortune to tempt the avaricious, she possessed sufficient beauty to attract the voluptuary. One of these wandering creatures, who stroll about the world to cheat the rich, and betray the inexperienced; who come to our country no one knows whence, and live no one knows how; and who gain a footing in our social circles by means of this pernicious leaning towards strangers,—chanced to come prowling that way, and was, as usual, brought to the house of the good lady who once had had the honour of dancing in the same set with the Prince.

He passed for a man of rank,—talked of his noble relations,—of going back to England,—of the delights of courts, watering-places, and, in short, played off all that light artillery before which the ill-fortified citadel of woman's heart so often yields. The good lady mother talked

with the man of rank about certain lords whose names she had heard in England, and who were all his intimate acquaintances. He described them at a hazard, or rather at no hazard, for he soon discovered my lady knew as little as himself about them. In short, to make an end of a long story,—the old lady fidgeted,—the young one played off the fine lady,—till, at last, with great apparent circumspection, the illustrious foreigner asked her hand in preference to running away with her, because she had a few thousand dollars portion. The catastrophe rapidly took place. As soon as he had got possession of the money, and was tired of his bride, he ran away, no one knew where. Poor Maria never was presented at court; but pines away, in the most heart-sickening widowhood—a deserted wife: and the poor mother has never since told the story of dancing in the same set with the Prince.

But admitting our young belles marry foreigners of the same rank with themselves, they will find, when they go abroad, that from being in the first society here, a society as essentially refined as the best in Europe, they sink into one far below it in every respect; and instead of becom-

ing the belles of a new and brighter sphere, settle into the circle of illiterate and ill bred tallow-chandlers, and drysalters, well to do in the world, who go once a year in a buggy to Bath or Brighton. This happened to a sprightly friend of ours you know, who married a merchant of Birmingham, or Liverpool, I forget which; who was, to use a mercantile phrase, *first chop* in our city. She went to England, expecting to be first chop there too; for she had yet to learn, that there are abroad factitious distinctions in society, distinct from either riches, learning, refinement, or morals; and that the manners of people of the same grade materially differ on either side of the Atlantic. She persuaded her husband to settle in this country; and now, when asked about England, answers, like Cæsar, "It is better to be somebody even at home, than nobody abroad."

But I don't mean to confine this ridiculous *superstition* in favour of foreigners, exclusively to the ladies; and only mention them first out of politeness. The truth is that our men, young and old, on the seaboard, and in those places where formerly the colonial governors held their courts, are pretty much in the same abject state of mental depend-

ance, that characterized the people before the revolution. It is wearing away; but it is like the wearing away of the solid rock by drops of water, and will require at least another age to erase the impression. In truth, I have often felt indignant at the air of supercilious superiority with which an ignoramus, from a button manufactory at Birmingham, would contradict an American, who had derived his information from the most authentic sources with respect to England, of which, in truth, the button-man was totally ignorant. With these sort of persons, who formerly held great sway in our mongrel mercantile towns, where the American name is smothered under an inundation of agents of all nations. Every thing was better abroad than here, like Signior Falconi's thunder, which, as he used to say, was "better than you could get every day from de sky." I don't say this from any dislike to foreigners, but in pure mortification, to see our country crouch before upstart ignorance and presumption.

Follies and errors, instead of curing, perpetuate themselves, and become, like some insignificant people, immortal in their progeny. Thus, if there happens to be a competition between a

native and a foreigner for a professorship, or the direction of an academy or grammar-school, three to one this disposition to wonder at people from abroad occasions the latter to be preferred, partly because the trustees by whom he is to be chosen, are, for the most part, compounded of materials exceedingly well qualified to be led astray; but principally on account of the old colonial leaven, which is continually rising. The learned Governor ———, who was, ex-officio, a regent of our University, voted for a professor of languages, for no other reason than because he spoke with a foreign accent, which his excellency considered an infallible proof of his being a great scholar. If I wanted a dancingmaster, I would certainly prefer a native of France; if a musician, a German or Italian; if a groom, an Englishman: but, with reverence be it spoken, if I wanted a child brought up to love his countrymen above all others,—to cherish his country above all other countries,—to be an American, in short,—I would give him an American for his teacher.

It is to the want of a salutary preference for such teachers that we may mainly ascribe the tenacity of this ignorant disposition to wonder

at every thing from Europe or Great Britain. The professors and teachers naturally bring with them all the prejudices and attachments of their youth. They naturally and inevitably instill into the minds of their pupils an inordinate and inflated idea of the learning, science, and institutions of that country where their first impressions were received, and where their last attachments centre. They feel no attachment to this country—of course they can implant none; and their pupils are much more likely to imbibe discouraging notions of the superiority of others, than to be taught to emulate their science or learning. At the same time that this preference, so mortifying to the neglected scholars of our country, is thus displayed, we find continual complaints made of the want of these professors and teachers among ourselves, forgetting that it is only the hope of fame and reward that inspires the humble scholar to destroy the healthful vivacity of his body in nightly studies. When he finds that others are preferred before him, even the consciousness of superiority is but a feeble support against the neglect of mankind; and the force of example operates upon many others in a similar situation.

Genius will thrive amidst ridicule, abuse, and even persecution; but the soil of neglect, like the sands of the desert, neither produces, or brings any thing to maturity. There genius and science wander about, like poor Riley* and his companions, drinking their own tears, and withering into skeletons, under the influence of a fruitless soil, and a sky for ever neglecting to rain.

In vain may the learned critics of our country, who are made the guardians of our taste and literature, for the reasons that eunuchs are made guardians of the ladies of the harem; in vain may they lament that the genius of this country has not raised his head in all the majesty of youthful vigour, and freshness of blooming beauty. They may call him, but he will not appear; they may beckon him, but he will not come; they may lament, but he will not hear them; or, if he does hear, will shrink from such mortifying complaints. He is a spoiled child, that must be petted, and made much of, else he will be sulky and silent, or display his talent only to annoy the company. So long, in fact, as the circumstance of a writer's

* See Riley's Narrative. Ed.

being a native operates to the injury, rather than the benefit of his reputation; so long as the disposition to admire foreign productions, simply because they *are* foreign, exists in this country; so long, my dear Frank, will genius languish, and little red coats be cherished in drawing-rooms, to the utter discomfort of us natives. We must begin at the root, and employ those to give a direction to the human mind, in its infancy, who will most likely give it one in favour of home.

While, however, I condemn and despise this ignorant preference of foreigners, only because they *are* foreigners, which is the last ragged remnant of the ancient colonial spirit, I have no prejudice against strangers who seek an asylum in this country. All that their talents, virtues, or misfortunes deserve, I am willing to allow them. But, at the same time, I do not wish to select them to form the minds, and give a permanent direction to the attachments of the children of this country. I want also to see those literary efforts fostered that are written with the true American feeling; for it is such writings alone that, while they exalt the national character, instill into the minds of our people a love of their

country, and create an independence of intellect that, spurning at servile imitation, is the parent of originality. It has been the misfortune of our country, that many of its most popular writers were men who affected a contempt for their native land, and who considered it an unequivocal mark of superior refinement to undervalue every thing it contained. These men, instead of becoming the benefactors of the country, by defending its character and institutions, became accomplices in detraction—prostituted their pens to the purposes of our enemies; and vilified their fellow-countrymen, rather than not be thought genteel.

One able writer may ruin the reputation of half mankind. The children of Medea, it is said, were murdered by the Corinthians, who gave Euripides a great sum of money to write the play in which this horrible crime has been for ever entailed on the unfortunate mother.

The truth is, the great cities along the seacoast, are not quite one half American cities, and change their aspect every year, as a snake does its skin. When I last visited N———, after an absence of two years, I walked the streets without

knowing any body. The ancient inhabitants seemed to have been swallowed up by the strange party-coloured mixture of all kinds of figures and faces, that elbowed me on every side. The signs, which in our frolics we used sometimes to pull down, were all changed, and the city was a new world. Hence arises the singular changes of politics observed to take place in this ancient and renowned emporium of foreign trade and foreign influence. Foreigners rule the banks; foreigners are the loudest at elections; and foreigners, in more than one place, have had the hardy ingratitude to array themselves in direct opposition to the people, who afforded them an asylum, and a participation of their rights, as well as of their happiness. A wretched fugitive, who lately set up a paper in your city, has had the insolence to upbraid us with affording his starving countrymen last winter, nothing but soup, in charity; as if we were under any obligation, but that of our own humanity, to support them! Does he suppose we feel their visits to this country an honour, or an obligation; or that we are bound to pamper them with luxuries as strangers of distinction? He has, however, made some amends for his in-

solence, by advising his countrymen in future to emigrate to South America; and I earnestly hope they will be fools enough to take his advice.

This subject reminds me of a queer fellow that went by the name of *Paddy Whack*, who came over from a place called *Knockecroghery*, as I think, and palmed himself upon a good-natured kinsman of mine, whom we familiarly called *Uncle Sam*. Pat, who had many good qualities, but was a little apt to forget himself, and become ungrateful, owed his being born at all to a bull. Not that I mean to say, that like Minotaurus, he was begotten by a bull; but only that his mother made a blunder, and mistook meat before grace, for grace before meat. Every body knows the consequence of these mistakes. His mother was the veritable owner of the famous cow that turned white in the face, by reason of eating a meal-bag. His father denied him from the first, so I will say nothing of that branch of the family. Pat was grandson, by the mother's side, to the well known humorist *Paddy from Cork*, who wore his coat buttoned behind to keep his belly warm; and the old man was so pleased with his mode of eating buttermilk without any teeth, that

he insisted upon having him christened after his name. So he was baptized after the *Knockecroghery* fashion, by going a month without having his face washed. He was also taught the alphabet, after the Knockecroghery fashion, beginning at the end; for they are famous in that town for doing things wrong end foremost. He used to say, the first thing that brought him into notice, was, his always laughing when he was sorry, and crying whenever he felt an extraordinary degree of exhilaration—a sure sign of a great genius, who ought never to do things like any body else. At the age of seventeen he made an oration, at a spouting-club, in which he was thought to beat Charles Philips, for he used most beautiful figures, only they did not at all apply to the subject. The next time, he chose his subject on purpose to suit his figures; and the audience swore by J——s, that it was a capital speech, only not at all to the purpose. To remedy this, and attain to the art of suiting his orations to the purpose, and his figures to the subject, Pat took to studying the law after the Knockecroghery fashion, free of expense. That is to say, he had himself regularly indicted every term,

for assault and battery, or some trifle of that sort. This he called attending the courts, and by these means he at last got well acquainted with the law, and knew exactly how near he could go to a halter without being choked. Then he set up for himself, and furnished his own capital; that is to say, he went to law on his own account, with his mother's executor, for the cow that ate the meal-bag, which turned out, on the trial, to be a bull. So *Pat* was nonsuited, which did not *suit* him at all, for by this time he was out at the elbows.

About this time he heard of America, the SWEET LAND OF THE EXILE, where the industrious stranger is ever welcome, and ever sure of competency, if he seeks it any where but at the grogshops and soup-houses—and where freedom, plenty, safety, and happiness, are so often repaid by base ingratitude. To that happy land he set out, on a stick instead of a horse, and was quite surprised at two things—to wit, that his horse was of little use in preventing his getting tired, and that he could not get to America by land. So he took shipping, and when he came there, the first thing he did was to abuse the

captain of the ship, for not giving him a free passage, and the people for not giving him roasted turkeys instead of soup, for charity; seeing how valuable a citizen he was, and what a compliment he had paid the country by his visit. He was still more nettled, when he found that he got no practice, except with people who paid no fees; for there were already more lawyers than suits, in that famous city. So he took up the business of patriotism, and fastened himself upon *Uncle Sam*, who was a liberal, good-hearted old fellow, that kept open house to all comers, and received *Pat* with kindness and hospitality, because he was poor and an exile. Uncle Sam, in a little time gave him all the privileges of his household, kitchen, cellar and all; and in truth, fed and pampered him at such a rate, that in a little time his legs came to look like Jupiter's thigh with a little whiskey Bacchus in it. As I said before, Pat was a fellow of many good qualities—hospitable, brave, and generous—but his hospitality was not often exercised in favour of Uncle Sam, for he had no house to be hospitable in; his bravery was rather indiscriminate at times, for he sometimes defended himself

when nobody attacked him, and generally attacked friends as well as foes; and his habit of unthinking generosity too often made him forget the favours he received, and become ungrateful. Pat, in fact, was a fellow that did not get credit for half his good qualities; because he had such a queer left-handed way of showing them, that one half of the time people mistook them for faults.

Living so long at Uncle Sam's good house, he began to think to himself, that because he had been nursed in the eagle's nest, he must needs be a young eagle. So he said to some roaring lads that used to come to see him and drink Uncle Sam's whiskey, "By J——s, let's turn Uncle Sam out of house and home, and have a time of it! The old fellow, to be sure, has taken me into his house, and entertained us all handsomely; but what of that—we are the true liberty boys, and will take the bull by the horns at once. So down with the old aristocrats, the fellows that side with old England, because they won't give us their land, and who have kept us out of our inheritance these two hundred years; for was'nt Kit Columbus a Knockecroghery man sure?" So

they got drunk upon Uncle Sam's whiskey, and then marched into the parlour to turn him out of doors. But the old man and his sons were too stout for them, and put them out for that time. But as he could not find in his heart to discard *Pat* from it, he was such a queer, good-natured dog, there is no knowing what may happen in the end. The last I heard of Pat, was his making such a rout at an election, that the people in the neighbourhood were obliged to get up a society for the protection of native-born citizens, against Pat and his roistering companions, who wanted to be represented by *Pat* in the legislature! I ought to have mentioned, that *Uncle Sam*, after he had put down the Knockecroghery lads, made a speech as follows. He told them they were welcome to his table, and might come and eat and drink whenever they pleased, provided they showed a decent sense of the favour. "But," added the old man, shaking his silver-locks, "if puffed up with the generous plenty of this good land, you attempt to array yourselves in opposition to its long established possessors—mark my words, Pat—you will make enemies of your best friends, and cease to be of consequence, except in some

pitiful contest of two opposite factions, when some designing demagogue will find it for his interest to court your support, by promises he could not, if he would, and would not, if he could, perform. You may do well enough in partnership with us, but will infallibly fail, if you set up for yourselves." For the application of my story, I leave that to your own jurisprudence, as the Bank Directors say. Farewell.

LETTER XXXVII.

DEAR FRANK,

THERE was once a city in Argolis, from whence the descent to Tartarus was so short, that they always dispensed with the practice of putting a piece of money into the mouths of the dead to pay Charon. I slept last night at a town which certainly would have disputed precedence with that of Argolis, had it been situated in Greece. I will not mention its name—and if people find it out of themselves it will not be my fault.

We left it by daylight in the morning, and soon struck into a beautiful country, affording a charming contrast to the village we had left. We could not help wondering that people should prefer such a town to such a country, and quit the sober independence of rural life to become peddlers in a market-town. In my mind the wisest answer ever

given by an oracle, was that to the Ephesian, when he inquired where he should go and settle. He was told to fix his house where he saw peasants dancing, crowned with olives. This answer pictured a country, fruitful, gay, and of a mild temperature; for it is only in happy climes that the earth produces olives—and wherever the peasants are seen dancing on the green by the side of healthful and happy streams, we may gather that the fruitfulness of the country affords them leisure from labour, and hearts to be gay. True, these blessings may be marred by the tyranny of a despotic government, or the exactions of a petty lord, yet still I have such faith in the influence of a mild and genial climate, and a fruitful soil, that I can never associate them with misery and want. It is in such situations that the human mind perhaps attains to the highest point of delicacy and refinement of which it is capable; and it is here too that it degenerates into the lowest degree of sensuality and corruption. Here the peasant has leisure from labour to cultivate his taste, and give reins to his imagination, and consequently the people will become musical, and poets will rise up in the rural fields. In a

happy clime, where the juice of the grape supplies the place of intoxicating spirits or stultifying beer, leisure often begets refinement instead of brutality in the peasantry, and degenerates into effeminacy rather than rudeness.

The character of our country people, though varied by an infinite variety of shades, produced by a descent from various nations, is still uniform in many respects, and different from all other people. They are most like the English, not only on account of a majority being of English descent, but because, like them, they are a working people, consisting, with few exceptions, of three classes of men, different in their vocations, but all equally laborious—the farmer, the merchant, and the mechanic, in which I include the labourers of all kinds attached to these different professions. Each of these is equally stimulated by the necessity of employment or the love of gain, which is perhaps stronger here than elsewhere, because money is almost the sole ground of distinction in commercial towns—and for the additional reason, that here a man works more for himself, and less for others, than in any other country. Our taxes are light, and we have

neither landlords or tythes to consume the products of industrious labourers. The merchant labours for wealth as the sole means of acquiring distinction in a country where there is no aristocracy of birth or title—the farmer and mechanic, partly from the causes I just mentioned, and partly from causes connected with the climate of our country, which, in most of those parts which have been settled long enough to give a colouring to the national character, is subjected to long and inclement winters.

It may in truth be said, that one-half of the year, while the people of other climes, where music is heard in the fields and along the river-banks, are sporting like butterflies, our people are labouring to provide for the other half. The former is labouring to keep his cattle and family from starving in the long season, when the grass does not grow nor the fruits ripen. All this time too the labourer is toiling, not only to get a little beforehand, to lay up his winter's wood and various other necessaries, and put his house in order to keep out the winter's blast. But in other more genial climates, where the flowers and the fruits appear in perpetual succession, and

where the slightest cabin is sufficient to exclude the weather, a man can play the butterfly, and sip the flowers all summer, without perishing with hunger and cold when the winter comes. A little labour satisfies his present wants, and the future, like the present, is easily supplied. In the intervals of his labours he can sit in the shade, when all nature is smiling around him, and give a loose to his imagination, if he has any. The happy temperature of the climate takes off his attention from his own personal feelings—for his teeth neither chatter with cold, nor is he rendered exanimate by the burning heat. It is then that the soul seems to assert its independence, and relieved from all participation in the cares of existence, becomes all feeling, all imagination. Then poetry will be sung in natural strains, and music will echo along the rivers or by the side of the mountains. It was the shepherd Orpheus who, in the pleasant land of Greece, first waked the spirit of poetry and music among the woods and rocks; it was the shepherds of Chaldea and Egypt who first studied the science of the stars as they watched their flocks by night—and it is to the age of the Nomades that we owe the first

dawnings of all those beautiful arts and sciences that adorn and embellish our existence. Two causes contributed to this; leisure, and a luxuriant climate. The first will do much; but it is the union of both that gives birth to music and poetry—which, if not twins, were born in quick succession.

There was something, however, in the clannish spirit and institutions of Scotland, that in connexion with the shepherd life that subsisted more particularly in the highlands, together with the romantic scenery of that region, which seems to have had the same effect that genial climes had on other nations. The pastoral life, of all others common to the mass of mankind, affords the most leisure;—the shepherd was relieved by his dogs from the actual labour of watching, collecting, and driving the flocks in his charge. In the summer they subsisted on the verdure of the mountain, and in the winter his chief was responsible for their food, since it was to him that they appertained. Even in this inclement and rugged region the mass of the people enjoyed a great portion of leisure, and being too poor to waste it in expensive amusements, resorted to minstrelsy

and music to pass the time. Hence, in the days of feudal dependence and clannish affinity, were composed those delightful songs, and melting or inspiring airs, that thrill to the heart,—and I earnestly hope will stand their ground against that affected refinement which would engraft the enervating productions of emasculated Italy upon the manly and nervous race that people America. If we are to borrow our music and our song, let us imitate Scotland—whose poetry and music has a character of manly tenderness and incorruptible simplicity, that I would not exchange for all the emasculated poetry of Metastasio, or the effeminate strains of his cotemporary musicians.

Do not mistake the foregoing profound speculations, for a sighing after climates like that of Italy, and a people like the Italians. I am only attempting to give a reason for the almost total absence of music in the country through which I have lately been travelling, as well as in almost every portion of the United States. In their love of music and poetry, our countrymen are certainly behindhand with the people of Europe; and, as a philosophical traveller, I felt myself bound in honour to account for the phenomenon,

which I hope I have done to your satisfaction. Depend upon it that there is no unmixed good in this world—for even labour, which is the parent of all the hardy virtues, is equally the parent of a sordid indifference to the finer impulses of the mind. Where necessity or the love of gain impels to uninterrupted toils, there will be every thing necessary to the eating and drinking part of life, but little to adorn or embellish our existence. The virtues that exalt a nation in power, by increasing its wealth, and defending its honour—the hardihood of spirit that bristles, if a finger is pointed at its rights or at its independence—the lofty feelings, that shrinking from the shadow of servility, sometimes exhibit an appearance of rudeness—the intelligence that investigates and judges for itself, on every occasion—and the spirit of liberty that sometimes leans even to licentiousness—these are the constituents of a great people—and these are our's, although you may not find them much about where you are. For my part, I am content with these; they are too valuable to be exchanged for the fine arts, and if we must make a choice, give me the virtues of men, rather than the amusements of connois-

seurs. It does not mortify me that other people have better fiddlers, dancers, and sculptors than ourselves, so long as we beat them in spirit, freedom, plenty, and happiness.

The truth is, that mine honest, sanguine, and heels-over-head friend, brother Jonathan, is one of those people who are for eating their cake and having their cake, and reconciling all sorts of incongruities. He is for doing things in a great hurry, and would be free and hardy, with all the enervated refinements of slavery. Not content with all the enjoyments necessary to happiness, and all the essential characteristics of a nation destined to mighty things, the honest lad would needs strut about in all the gilded paraphernalia of pictures, palaces, and statues, that serve to amuse some nations into a forgetfulness of their chains. He is continually flaring away in the awkward secondhand finery of Europe, that gives him the appearance of a servile imitator, instead of coming out in his honest homespun, to challenge the respect of the world. The rogue often reminds me of a little fat, greedy urchin, with an apple in each hand and its mouth full of gingerbread, whining and fretting, because it can't ap-

propriate to itself at the same time a pretty picture or lacquered image on the mantelpiece.

You must excuse my rambling letters, remembering that I only promised to write to you on the express condition of rambling to all points of the compass if I pleased. In the dearth of incidents I must draw upon honest little speculation, and tell you what I think, rather than what I see. However, my next shall be descriptive of something or other, unless I am again led astray. I meant to tell you about Berkeley Springs, which merited a description; but they slipt my memory somehow or other. Please Jupiter, you shall have it before long. Good bye.

LETTER XXXVIII.

DEAR FRANK,

EIGHT days ago we left the town of W———, famous for several things which I have forgot; so you have escaped a description this time—for which it is your duty to be thankful. From this place we crossed over to Berkeley Springs, a famous place, where the beaumonde resort from all the country around. After riding across a mountainous track, the most wild and rugged of any I remember to have seen in the course of our tour, in turning an angle of the road we suddenly opened upon one of the most beautiful and striking contrasts I ever saw. On a little green sward, skirting along the foot of a steep mountain, at least a hundred gay people of both sexes were rambling among the trees, just in the twi-

light of a mild summer evening. Oliver shouted at the sight, and even my philosophy shook in the wind at the view of so many fair damsels, every one of whom dressed in white, put me in mind of white fringe upon a green petticoat. Till this moment I had been exclusively in love with nature; but now, to my shame be it confessed, I began to comprehend the superiority of the beauties of art—by which I mean no reflection on the ladies.

The truth is, after having rambled a long while among the vast solitudes of nature—where a human being is among the rarest of animals, and though certainly a fellow-creature, yet so different in tastes, manners, and acquirements, as to afford little affinity of mind, there was something exquisitely exhilarating, thus to break upon people resembling our accustomed associates, sporting gayly in the midst of the wild mountains. Perhaps there is no situation, in which we taste the pleasures of refined society with a keener zest than when, after losing them for awhile, we meet with them associated with romantic scenery, and buried as it were in the bosom of nature. We had the good fortune, as well as the unexpected

pleasure, of meeting old friends, and this tempted us to stay some time.

As it is the prevailing opinion among your fellow-citizens, that there is nothing refined to the south of Schuylkill, and no watering-place worth visiting except Long-Branch, I will try and set you right in this matter. The truth is, these springs are as gay, as fashionable, and far more delightfully situated than any I have ever visited. In all the constituents of a fashionable watering-place, Berkeley maintains a most respectable rank, inasmuch as it affords as great a variety of character, as many gay equipages, and gay people, and almost as great a lack of variety of amusement, as Ballston or Long-Branch.

You meet with every distinct variety among the belles and beaux. To begin with the ladies. There is the sentimental lady, who must have blue eyes—by all means, and who it is indispensably necessary should be very fond of retirement—a preference which she demonstrates by going in search of it every summer to a watering-place. Then there is the blue-stocking lady, who is all

for the delights of literature, and who comes to watering-places because they are the resort of scholars and people of literary tastes! These ladies are a great terror to the race of bucks—because they are continually drawing draughts on their understandings, which these gentlemen can't conveniently accept at sight. But the most numerous class of ladies to be found at these resorts is that of the regular built, systematic, determined, and invincible belles, who go about as roaring lions, seeking whom they may devour. Like strolling actresses, they are seldom seen twice in the same place, but after playing off their airs and graces, becoming tired of, and tiring every body, vanish away, and never shine in that sphere again. These unfortunate belles are to be seen every where, flashing at intervals like fireflies of a summer evening, dazzling occasionally, but never warming; and generally, like our aunt Kate, end in becoming very efficient members of some odd society for the propagation of—any thing but the human species. In enumerating the varieties to be found at a fashionable watering-place, it would be unpardonable to omit two classes of el-

derly matrons, who are very constant attendants on these establishments. The first are very piously scandalous; and, like the old lady in the Spectator, whom Rhodomanthus beckoned to the left hand, are so busy correcting the faults of others, that they have no time to attend to their own. They are ever on the watch to repress any innocent ebullition of vivacity, and to poison every little moment of youthful gayety, by sour looks of reprehension, sideblow innuendoes, and appalling shakes of the head. The other class, is that which marshals its daughters, nieces, and proteges to battle at these great marts, and stands on the alert to see that they don't fall in love with any body not well-established in business, or well to do in the world. But at the same time they exercise this matronly caution they take every opportunity of showing the young ladies off to rich bachelors and prosperous traders, who have plenty of money—or what is just the same thing —plenty of credit. I cannot help here observing that there is a class of females one never meets at these places, except now and then, when we sometimes see a solitary one, pale, languid, and

weak, whom the hope of recovery from some slow and sure malady, tempts from her home. I mean those who find their happiness in the domestic circle, and the enjoyment of that unobtrusive Paradise, created, adorned, and consecrated by the exercise of domestic virtues. It is these which constitute that portion of the sex, among which men find companions who assist in bearing the burthen of existence, instead of adding to its weight; who shed the brightest light when the storm of adversity thickens and blackens—and who, without stooping to any cares or occupations unworthy a gentlewoman, are guardians of the household, of man, and the consecrators of his fortune. The sweetest days of summer are those in which the sun, partly hid behind the light clouds, warms without dazzling; and the sweetest women are those who never shine—except to those they love. Ambition to become the wonder of the world makes men gods or demons; but operating on women, only makes them ridiculous. It drives them so much into the world, that we become tired of seeing, or hearing of them; and too often, in the anxiety to gain the

object, stimulates them to conciliate the vanity of men, by attentions and flatteries unworthy a modest and delicate female.

Of the beaux, who are most frequently to be met with at these fashionable watering-places, the most numerous class is generally composed of young fellows labouring under a sort of anti-maladie du Pays. They have become tired of the same amusements, and the same people; they have paced up and down the same fashionable promenade till every body is tired of them; and they have been so often in the same society, that they have absolutely talked themselves quite out, and find it easier to get new auditors than new ideas. Of this genus there are two varieties. The one neglects the ladies, because he affects to despise them; but the real truth is—that he has been so much in the society of horses and dogs, that a *whoa* and a whistle are the extent of his vocabulary, and a bark and a neigh the limits of his comprehension. The other variety is composed of those who limit their attentions to asking a lady to dance, &c., and who stand sentry round a fashionable belle, without saying a word,

reminding us of a guard of mutes about the favourite sultana.

Next comes the spruce bachelor of sixty-five, who, having breakfasted and dined on single blessedness, is anxious to sup upon matrimony, by way of variety. This is generally a man with every thing comfortable about him at home, but who, not knowing when he is well off, goes to a watering-place to find a wife. Here, instead of pairing with one whose age, habits, and tastes correspond with his own, he singles out a high-bred belle, who lives only for gayety and splendour, and who condescends to marry this reverend youth—for his riches and equipage. Instead of plucking a few flowers from the brink of the grave, the poor man gathers but thorns and briers —sinks into a piece of mere fuller's earth, and ends at length with fulfilling the destiny of Swift's broomstick, which, in its last stage, was used to light a fire for other men to warm themselves by.

Sometimes, however, in this matrimonial trial, the lady is the dupe, and the bachelor the rogue. It not unfrequently happens that the old gentleman who thus goes to a watering-place to seek

his fortune, is on the eve of bankruptcy, and, while his last light is glimmering, makes a desperate attempt to catch some little unwary moth that flutters round his expiring taper. I have known many instances of this fraud, which would be truly lamentable, did not the woman who sells herself in this manner deserve her fate. As it is, her situation is painful in the extreme; for she has not only forfeited her own approbation, but deprived herself of all claim to commiseration, without gaining the object of these precious sacrifices. It is a mutual fraud; both parties equally merit punishment—and both are unworthy of pity.

But in this review of the fashionable train, I must not forget the spruce little widower, with grown-up daughters, whom he makes a point to send to some distant boarding-school, that they may not stand in the way of a second engagement. People sometimes hug their chains, we are told, which accounts for a man marrying a second time; otherwise this phenomenon might puzzle the philosophers. The little widower generally succeeds wonderfully well, provided he can keep

his grown-up daughters from rising up in judgment against him, and sports a handsome equipage. But even without this, he very generally succeeds somehow or other—either by superior enterprise, superior perseverance, or by possessing the art of rousing the young lady's curiosity about what happens in the state of matrimony. Women, as Rosalind says, "have no doublet and hose in their disposition;" and I am credibly informed of one woman who killed herself out of sheer curiosity to know how it felt. I see no reason why women may not sometimes marry for the same reason; especially as this theory will account for some marriages otherwise inexplicable.

To these varieties of the fashionable world, if we add a few *lusus naturæ* belonging to no distinct species, such as clever people, good women, invalids whom the doctors, in despair of curing or getting their bills paid, have sent to drink the waters, we have pretty much the motley group of a watering-place. Among these, however, one seldom fails to find a little knot of pleasant people, with whom we are sorry to part,

at the end of a week or two, the usual time of sojourning at such places. This happened to be our lucky lot; and it was in consequence of this that we staid nearly a week at Berkeley. There is a fine drawing-room here, in which the ladies meet to chat, or work, and play at chess, or devise some pleasant excursion. Every night or two there is a ball, in a very splendid room appropriated to that purpose; and in afternoons it is pleasant to stroll backwards and forwards along the brook that skirts the green in front of the springs, that gush out from the foot of the mountain. There is a pavilion built over the spring, which is used for drinking, and two bath-houses—one for either sex. The spring which supplies the ladies' bath is one of the finest I have ever seen. It bursts from a fissure in the rock in the form of a cone, much larger than the crown of a hat, and, together with the others, forms a fine stream, in some places six or eight yards wide. This place was formerly the property of the family of Fairfax, once lords of a great portion of the tract of country called the Great Northern Neck of Virginia, situated between the Potomac

and Rappahannock rivers. One of these potent chieftains vested the springs and a little tract around in trustees, to be chosen from time to time, for the use of all comers for ever. People using the baths pay a small sum, which is appropriated by the trustees to keeping up the repairs of the place, and other objects of utility and ornament.

Among the peculiarities of watering-places, one may always notice a certain odd sort of rivalship prevailing among the ladies of the different sections or states of the Union. This is exhibited in a certain shyness and civility, and in the various little knots gathering together in different parts of the room, together with certain sly looks and glances that all fashionable ladies understand, and resent—nobody else knows why. When a female arrives, they sit in judgment upon her directly; and if she does not possess the mysterious, inexplicable attributes of bon ton—whew! marry come up!—and all that sort of thing. The ladies here were principally from Virginia and Maryland, and it was amusing enough to see how they measured distances, like strange game-

cocks in the same barn-yard. I have been thus particular in my details, because the good citizens of your parts, who always call that the genteelest place which is most frequented by themselves, have not the least idea, that in the midst of the Virginia mountains there is a little spot, where is to be found all the airs, graces, paraphernalia, caprices, and elegancies of the most fashionable assembly. Every man is the centre of his own universe, and always considers that a strange place in which he is a stranger. Good bye.

LETTER XXXIX.

DEAR FRANK,

I RECEIVED the book you sent me by our friend T——, who came to Berkeley the day before yesterday, and thank you for it, for it has afforded me infinite amusement, not the less on account of its intrinsic follies, than for the numerous certificates of its merits, with which it was accompanied. It seems now-a-days as if our booksellers, who of course adapt themselves to the spirit of the times, dare not venture on the publication of a book without some little scrap of commendation from a Review, or a string of testimonials from divers worthy literary characters of this country, who regularly stand godfathers to every new work, and most benevolently praise it in proportion to its demerits. By this method the gentle reader is made to be fully satisfied of the merits of a book

before he pays his money for it; and is relieved entirely from the trouble of exercising his own judgment. This way of getting a book into credit and circulation, is doubtless borrowed from the venders of quack-medicines, who establish the wonderful virtues of their nostrums, and impose upon the credulity of mankind, by means of certain certificates they procure from ignorance and stupidity. But I have other matters in hand just now.

The most common infirmity which brings people to watering-places, is the disease of I don't know what, the symptoms of which begin to appear generally about the beginning of July. The lady—for ladies are more generally subject to this disease than the other sex—first begins to complain of the intolerable heat of the town, and fans herself violently for several days. If this don't do, she begins to complain of weakness and want of appetite and spirits; and if this don't do, the Doctor is called in; who, to get rid of a patient whose disorder he knows to be incurable, recommends a trip to the springs. After this, if the lady is not permitted to go, the husband is voted an inhuman monster at all tea-parties.

It is inconceivable what trouble people take sometimes to gain amusement, when they set out on purpose. I have known many, at these places, expressly set apart for the reception of people who don't know what to do with themselves, who actually took more pains to keep awake all day, than a poor man does to maintain his family. Some will take romantic excursions into swamps to see the country; some will play billiards from morning till night; some will get under trees with a book, and try with all their might to recollect what they are thinking or reading about; and others will dress five or six times a day to pass the time. After spending a few weeks in this way, interspersed with a little flirtation with the married ladies, and a little love with the young ones, people begin to feel the value of home, and are very glad to get there again. Indeed the great use of these places is to make us in love with home, the comforts of which are greatly enhanced, by the singular inconveniences of a watering-place!

Berkeley, in addition to its pleasant rural situation at the foot of a steep mountain, and its little green promenade by the side of the brook, has

many pleasant rides on horseback in its neighbourhood. The most interesting of these leads to what is called the Caphon Rock, which is in fact a mighty mass of rocks, tumbled up on the top of a mountain, from which there is a noble prospect to the westward. One day I took a solitary ride there, while Oliver was gallantizing the ladies, a vocation for which his invincible good humour and unfailing vivacity eminently qualify him.

The mass of great rocks, lying just on the western declivity of the mountain, would appear more singular, were such phenomena not so common on the mountains in this country. How they got there nobody can tell, or at least nobody but the geologists, who like honest Sysiphus, don't mind rolling rocks to the tops of the mountains, even though they tumble down the next minute. From the summit of the highest point of this mass of rocks, there is a clear view of the valley of Caphon, or Cacapehon, as it is called in the maps. On the right of this valley, at its western boundary, the Potomac comes out from a break in the mountain, crosses it at the foot of another, in a line almost as straight as a canal, and loses itself again in the

mountains at the eastern extremity of the valley. To the south is seen the river Caphon, winding and turning, in every direction, so as to form the appearance of several little green islands; and at last, with a sort of affected reluctance, joining its waters with those of the Potomac, just before it breaks through the eastern mountain.

The valley is surrounded on all sides by high hills, beyond which, to the west, higher ones appear in continued succession, paler and paler, until they are lost in the heavens, by becoming confounded with the blue sky. Houses were dispersed at solitary distances, whose curling smoke, as it rose out of the trees, added to the peaceful character of the scene, and divested it of that melancholy loneliness, which affects us in contemplating those beautiful landscapes, which have never yet been appropriated by man. After a while, I descended the mountain to where the two rivers form a junction, and forded them both, for it was a very dry season, and the streams of this country were very low. I could see along the banks of the Potomac, where the logs were lodged, and in the crotches of trees, sedge and branches deposited by the waters, at

least twenty-five feet above the present level of the current. You can form no idea how these mountain streams swell with the rains or the melting of the snows; or with what tremendous force and velocity they roll and roar along at such times.

In returning from the valley, I went to take a last look from the rock. It was becoming cloudy, or rather hazy, and little showers were falling in some parts, while others were glowing in the sun. The light and shade was disposed in endless variety, and the general haze of the atmosphere, softened the objects appearing through its medium, as past scenes are mellowed and endeared by the slight obscurity thrown over them by the mists of memory.

I don't know what may be the moral or religious influence of such scenes, since although they assuredly give birth to pure and lofty emotions, they are apt to make us too much in love with this world. One thing however is pretty certain, that it is among such regions as these, composed of rugged mountains and rural vales, that the people are found most attached to their home, and modes of life. It is such scenes that

they are found most to lament when far away, to remember the longest, and to cherish the most dearly. The natives of cities never get the maladie du Pays, for paved streets, brick-houses, and rattling carts possess neither the charms nor the music of rural vales, hid in the bosom of the hills, or clear streams murmuring among moss-covered rocks. Liberty, too, dwells in the mountains, and where she lives, men are happier than any where else; for they are exempt from the train of petty insults and impositions, practised on the subservient race, and from that galling sense of inferiority, which, when they cease to feel, they are little better than brutes, and when they do feel, make them little less than miserable. Good bye.

LETTER XL.

DEAR FRANK,

FOUR days ago we left Berkeley Springs, and arrived here the day before yesterday. The country through which we passed is limestone, but whether of the primitive crystalline granular transition, or fletz formation, I neither know or care. It has several sulphur springs, one of which, near Martinsburg, is much frequented. In riding along the road on Saturday afternoon, we saw about a dozen fine tall young fellows, in white shirts and trowsers, shooting at a mark with rifles. This is a customary recreation, in the interior of this State, as well as in the western country; and from this early habit arises that fatal precision in firing which cost the enemy so dear at New-Orleans, and other places, during the late war. While this practice continues, and every man can keep a gun without

being sent to Botany Bay, we must ever possess a decided superiority in war, over other nations, where the people are so insensible to the blessings they enjoy under a good government, that they are obliged to be kept without arms, for fear they should be stupid enough to turn them against their best friends. Our good people, being better satisfied in this respect, are relied on for the defence of their government, rather than feared for their hostility. They are enjoined, under a penalty, to furnish themselves with arms, instead of being obliged to fill their gun-barrels with tallow, and bury them in bogs, as in poor Ireland, that unreasonable nation, which even centuries of oppression have not yet reconciled to bondage.

Martinsburg, where we dined and slept, is bedded in limestone rocks, that appear in various fantastic forms above the surface, and give it a singular character of ruggedness. The waters seem, on some occasion long past, to have been mightily troubled in this place; and the famous geological crust of the earth has tumbled in at various places very abruptly, causing divers holes and ravines, bedded and sided with limestone. In passing from this place to Harper's Ferry, for the first time in my

life I began to think seriously that there was some ground, or rather some water, for the system of Mynheer Werner. As for Oliver, he suddenly relapsed into the dropsical system, and deserted from Doctor Hutton to honest Mynheer Werner. The town of Martinsburg is situated in the midst of a rich and beautiful country, exhibiting the bright verdure and variegated surface common to limestone countries, and glowing with golden fields of wheat, —a nobler source of independence to their owners, than paper banks, or mines of gold. Many Quakers are settled in this district of country; and wherever they are, peace, industry, and all the sober habits of life abide, and the earth is sure to put forth her best array. Were I to attempt the personification of peace, instead of the olive-branch and the cornucopiæ, I would take the statue of old William Penn, as it stands in the hospital-yard in Philadelphia, with his broad-brimmed hat, and coat without buttons.

I must not forget to tell you that the only vestige of ancient chivalry I have seen in all Virginia, occurred at Martinsburg. The day being warm, we were sitting, probably to the number of twenty, on benches, at the shady side of the hotel,

fronting on one of the principal streets, when a man rode furiously by on horseback, and swore "he'd be d——d if he could not *lick* any man who dared to crook his elbow at him." This, it seems, is equivalent to throwing the glove in days of yore, or to the boyish custom of knocking a chip off the shoulder; but, alas! well was it said by Neddy Burke, the days of chivalry are gone,—and may they never return, say I. Instead of ten thousand fists leaping from the pockets of the supine spectators of this magnanimous outrage, they affected to take no notice of it; and, by heaven! not one accepted the challenge! Degenerate days!—and how unlike the fabled times, when such a gallant *raid* as this would, according to Dr. Morse, have cost many an eye, and many a bloody nose.

After stopping a little while at Shepherdstown, a neat village on the banks of the Potomac, we proceeded to this place, where we arrived at four o'clock, and decided to stay a day or two, as it suits both Oliver's taste and mine; his, because it is a capital place for finding out how the world was made; and mine, because it exhibits a combination of natural beauties, to be met with in no

other place that I have seen. Mr. Jefferson has sketched it with a few masterly touches; but luckily for us travellers, he has rather given its effect on the imagination than the senses. The minute description of the scene, as it presents itself on a more particular examination, remain to those who come after him, and to these I shall confine myself. I love to explore these grand and beautiful scenes of nature, and to excite the curiosity of others to do the same; for I know of no source of pleasure more pure, or more likely to draw the mind from debasing contemplations, or sensual pleasures. The voice of nature, uttered amid rocks, and mountains, and roaring floods, is the voice of God, and as we listen to it, we become wiser and better. I shall never think myself destitute of virtuous feeling, while I can enjoy, with enthusiasm, the charms of nature. To you, who have seen nothing like Harper's Ferry, the description may be gratifying; for if, as is generally the case with descriptions, it conveys no definite picture to your mind, it may chance to tickle your fancy, which is just as well.

We had been told, by several persons, that Mr. Jefferson's sketch of this place was highly exag-

gerated, and that it would by no means realize our anticipations. I am not able to tell what may have been the anticipations of other people; but certainly, I was more than satisfied with the reality. I believe it will be found, that those who are not familiar with the higher efforts of nature; who know not, by experience, the limits to which she is generally confined in all her operations, almost always create to themselves disappointment, by their own wild and undisciplined expectations. Experience having furnished them with no standard of the sublime and beautiful, they invariably substitute the creations of their own fancy for the descriptions of the writer; and finding, when they come to see it, that the picture was overcharged, accuse him of a deception, which, in fact, is practised by their own inexperienced imagination. I have heard people say, that the Falls of Niagara did not come up to their expectations; and could only account for their disappointment by supposing, what was undoubtedly the fact, that they had formed a picture in the imagination, to which nothing in nature afforded any analogy.

The stranger will find here many interesting objects not noticed by Mr. Jefferson, and he will

not find many things described by others. For instance, the Fall of thirty feet, perpendicular, noticed by Mr. Weld, who, it is believed, never visited this place, and therefore may be excused for a trifling blunder of this sort. I looked hard for it, but give you my word, it eluded all my researches, and became invisible, like many other things described as having an actual existence in this country, by divers travellers. In descending to the little settlement at the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah, on the Virginia side, just at the turning of a point in the road, which is cut or worn through the solid rock, the chasm in the Blue Ridge, through which the waters flow, bursts at once to the view. It is faced, on either side, by two most lofty barriers of solid rock, that seem to have arrested the wreck of the mountain. They are both rugged, and of the full height of sublimity;—that on the Virginia side approaching a perpendicular; the other passing beyond it, and hovering over the ferry-house with tremendous threatenings.

In approaching the mountain to make their last effort after effecting a junction, the two rivers, especially the Shenandoah, have had mighty strug-

gles, and have scattered the rocks and hills to the winds of heaven in the conflict. The rocks are left bare, pointed, projecting, and rugged, as if they had been violently broken off by some irresistible agency; and the beds of the river, before and after their junction, are composed of rocks above and under the surface, through which the waters roar and foam, with restless and terrible impetuosity, for some miles. High among the rocks and precipices, are a number of cottages, belonging to the workmen at the armoury; and higher still, on the summit of the cliff, resides the American eagle, emblem of our freedom, which is unassailable as the rock on whose side he builds his nest. Here he rests safe from every danger, since no sportsman from above or below can reach him.

There is a variety, a succession, and an infinite combination of objects, in this place, and its immediate neighbourhood, sufficient to give occupation and interest to several days. Three accessible points, however, present, in my mind, the finest views that are to be seen, except from the summit of the cliffs, whither none but very enterprising travellers attempt to ascend. The one is from a

very singular rock, called Jefferson's Rock, in compliment to the late president. This juts out at the side of a steep hill, a little way up the Shenandoah, and from it there is a fine view of the chasm in the mountain, and the noble landscape seen through the vista. The opposite side of the river is strikingly grand, consisting of a mountain almost perpendicular, in some places, formed of bare rocks, in others, covered with dark and melancholy pines. Above, the waters fret and foam, among rocks and little verdent isles; and just opposite is the Shenandoah Ferry, where the water subsides into a little basin, and flows smoothly to meet the Potomac.

The second point of view is just under the cliff on the Maryland shore, where can be seen the three waters before and after their junction; the little town lying at the foot of the hill, and behind it a number of beautiful swelling green hills, affording a fine contrast to the barren and grim aspect of the broken ridge of mountains. The emotions of the spectator in this situation are heightened when he looks up, and sees the tremendous crag, hovering directly over his head. The third, and I think the finest view of all, is from one of the

green hills, back of the little village, on which there is a small wooden building, called the magazine. It discloses the windings of the Potomac above, where it becomes a quiet stream, clear and smooth, contrasted with its rough tumultuous course below; and combines a view of the broken chasm, and opening vista, with a distant amphitheatre of mountains, far in the west, rising one above the other, and presenting, in their mellowing shades, and harmonious, undulating outlines, images of peace and repose, to sooth the mind in the midst of this wreck of nature. There is a canal on either side of the Potomac. The bank of that on the Virginia side, affords a most romantic walk, rendered interesting by the rough passage of the river on one side, and by the broken cliffs overhanging the other. Under one of these ledges stands a little white cottage, so singularly picturesque as to deserve a description. It is built in a pretty taste, and is literally canopied by a projecting ledge of rock, the top of which being flat, there is a little garden on it, in which I observed rosebushes, and beds of flowers. Before it is a little grass-plot, bordered by the canal. Will not the muse of this new world, think you, one day or

other, awaken in these beautiful scenes, and illustrate them in strains that will make them classical at some future period, like those of Greece, Italy, and Scotland? The same beauty ought to inspire the same enthusiasm every where; and the same enthusiasm will, sooner or later, produce the same effects. As yet we have not struck the harp whose strings vibrate in unison with the chords of our hearts. The genius that has awakened in our country, is not the genius of America, but a mongrel imitative creature, expatriated in his affections, and incapable of connecting the poetry of the country with the feelings, attachments, and associations of the people for whom he affects to write. But the time will come, when some chosen genius will find the secret of obtaining a reputation coexistent with the duration of this country, not so much by writing better poetry than other men, as by the addressing his lines to the hearts of his countrymen. He who wishes for a lasting fame, must write for his countrymen, and not for foreign critics.

About six miles up the river there is an ore-bank, belonging to the government, which I thought a great curiosity, until Oliver convinced

me to the contrary, by proving that several learned professors had accounted for such formations in the most satisfactory manner. Happy ignorance! that can sometimes wonder at things, that the learned consider as mere trifles. The ore lays in a bed of yellow clay, in lumps of various sizes, and distinct from each other. Some of these exhibit evident traces of the action of fire, and came very near bringing Oliver over to the Plutonian system again. Clays, of various and most beautiful tints, are mixed with these masses of ore; and it struck me, that some beautiful mineral colours might be obtained here. The bank is dug—I beg pardon, excavated;—a good writer now-a-days, you know, never uses a monosyllable when he can get a long word. Our language is mightily improved of late, and even colloquialisms have become scientific. "Mamma," said a little girl to her mother, the other day, "mamma, please to give me some sugar to correct the acid of these raspberries." This was called *sweetening*, in my time; but see what it is for young ladies to study chymistry. But to return. The ore-bank is excavated sixty or seventy feet, and is still unexhausted. This seems the

easiest way of procuring iron-ore that I have seen. Our little excursion to this place was rendered interesting, by the company of a botanical gentleman, whose love of the science led him to point out various plants to our notice, along the side of the river and canal, and to explain their nature and qualities; so that we received a lecture on botany, illustrated by real specimens, instead of pretty transparencies. This gentleman's name is seldom seen in the newspapers—unlike that of our friend the mammoth professor; neither is he, I believe, a member of forty societies. He resides constantly at this place, cultivating his favourite science, together with a few oddities—which, as they injure no one, every man has a right to indulge; and has found the way to reconcile some of the most inveterate antipathies of nature. It is a singular fact, that I saw a cat purring quietly in one corner of a chimney in his house, while in the other a quail was sitting on its nest, apparently without the least apprehension.

To-morrow we shall cross the ferry into Maryland, and so on towards home. As the remainder of our journey will be along a road with which you are already acquainted, and through

cities you have heretofore visited, it is extremely probable that I may not write you again ; unless I stay at the seat of government until congress meets, when I shall have something to talk about. I shall often look back on the scenes through which I have lately past, and long remember the period of my life employed in marking it as one of the most pleasant of my life. The more I see of my country and my countrymen, the more I love them ; and I am satisfied, that nothing but ignorance of each other, causes those stupid misconceptions, unfounded aspersions, and ridiculous antipathies, that still subsist between the different extremes of our country. A little social intercourse would do away all these, by showing distinctly to all, that there may be a difference in people, without any inferiority on either part ; and that in every class and every climate, there is enough of a family likeness to demonstrate us to be one people. Farewell.

FINIS.